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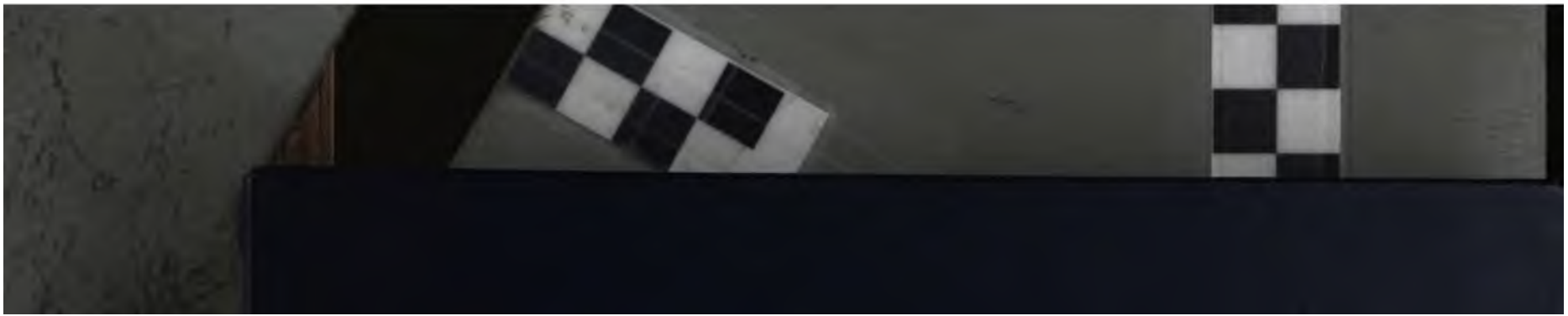
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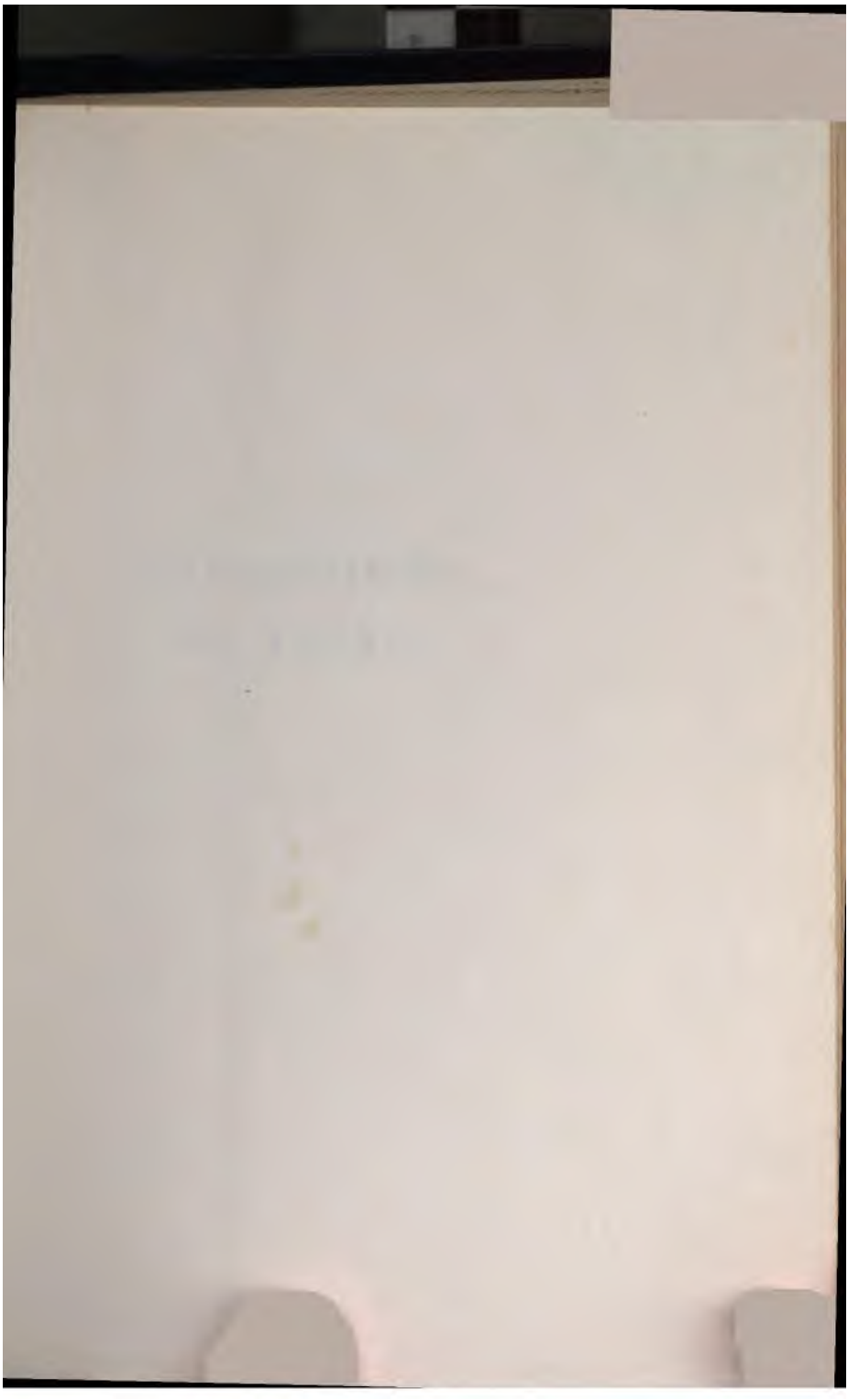
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IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN







Shell Picking.

IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN

BY GEO. H. RITTNER

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR AND HIS FRIENDS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1904



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PREFACE

THE object I have had in view in writing these pages has been not merely to give a description of my journeys through Japan, but to put on record some impressions of the development of the Japanese.

The changes which that country has undergone during the last decade have been so rapid and radical, that it would have been impossible within the limits of a single volume to give any adequate idea of their number or nature, for many of the topics touched on would require a volume to themselves.

The greatest change of all seemed to have taken place in the country's Art, which twenty years ago was its chief and most distinguishing glory; and I have tried to show the reasons for that deterioration. In so doing I have brought out the differences between town and country life, and hope that by so doing I may lead those among my readers, whose good fortune it is to visit Japan for themselves, to penetrate beyond

the modern life of the city into the remote country places, where the pristine life of old Japan still survives.

I have to tender to Mr. Max von Grunelius my grateful thanks for furnishing me with a number of photographs, which have served to make the series of illustrations more complete. Without them many essential features of land and life must necessarily have been omitted.

G. H. R.



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IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN

CHAPTER I

THE NATURAL BEAUTIES OF THE COUNTRY

"As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;
And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beast; then thinketh, 'I have found
A new land, but I die.'"

—TENNYSON.

To land in a strange country, far away from your own land, possibly without friends, unknown, ignorant of the surroundings and the pleasures to come, is in itself a charm. But to land in a country, the fame of which has so often been written; the certain knowledge that now at last the opportunity has arrived to inspect personally what you have read; to form ideas and compare them with the incomplete picture you

have drawn from books; to judge the people and form an opinion of the country—makes life a pleasure.

Approach Yokohama: when the ship is yet outside the bar she is surrounded by junks of every description, filled with men and women in novel garments. Hear their strange tongue; see their smiles and happy faces; watch the town as the steamer draws nearer, everything each moment becoming more distinct—in all this there is a charm, an inexpressible charm one must feel, because one has read and heard so much about the country. Ideas are formed about many countries; an imaginative picture of the people is drawn in the mind—their ways and customs. Often the written description of the place has given you the wrong impression; the crash comes, and a heartrending fall is in store, if on landing the imagination has carried you too far; a sickening feeling of despair creeps over you, such as is experienced if an ideal is crushed, an affinity is not what she appeared to be—the feeling a man may experience who is married and finds his wife faithless, or whose trusted friend plays him a scurvy trick—in all these cases one loses faith in one's fellow-beings. So also may a man who forms ideas about a country be disappointed, should that country not come up to his expectations, and if he is,

he will probably never allow that any good or natural beauty ever existed there, because his mind has received a blow, his ideals are crushed—ideals which possibly never existed except in his imagination.

I formed ideas of Japan before I ever intended to visit the country; ideas too, which, though at the time they seemed too high, now when I look back and compare them with the impressions I gathered whilst I was there, seem to me not half good enough. Thus one is often carried away by an imaginative mind; but about Japan no ideas can be correctly formed in advance. Until one has been there, no ideals can be placed high enough to do the country credit.

Imagine a steamer slowly gliding into port surrounded and followed by hundreds of boats picturesque in build, with sails of a novel shape, and filled with people in dresses one has only read about, or possibly seen as European ladies' dressing-gowns, colours of such a vivid shade that an artist's brush would hardly dare represent them in their true tint on canvas, even as he would shun to do credit to an eastern sunset when the whole sky is ablaze with every colour of the spectrum, crimson fading into orange, and yellow again waning into total darkness. No



artist, if he wishes to remain popular, dare depict such light effects as are here to be seen; if he did, few would admire his work as being natural, while thousands would slander him for reproducing on canvas what no man ever saw—and why? Because the eye, though it can see such colouring in nature itself, cannot retain the image of such an effect, and so, though the rendering may be correct in every detail, it appears too vivid because the mind has forgotten what the eye really saw.

Imagine again hearing these people talk, the quaint sounds that come to our ears unaccustomed to the language, the patter of their busy feet, encased in wooden sandals, on the narrow decks of their boats, the sails differing in colour from anything to which we have been accustomed, and filled with wind which gently propels the boats, rocked to and fro in the wash of the steamer. In the dim distance the town of Yokohama with its frontage of hotels and European built houses; behind them, and scarcely visible, the smaller native houses of the Japanese; soon even the jinrickishas can be seen racing down the Bund, which faces the sea to the pier, to await the arrival of the visitors, all anxious for a fare, ready to fleece the stranger at the first opportunity;

and even farther in the remote distance the most wonderful mountain in the world, that sacred worshipped mountain, the snow-clad peak of Fujiyama standing out clear against the cloudless blue sky, so blue as to be almost transparent. The steamer glides nearer and nearer until she casts her anchor, and the natives scale the ladder, all ready to turn an honest penny by carrying passengers' luggage.

Land there and see the streets, the bustle of busy people, small children with babies strapped to their backs, narrow streets with picturesque houses and tiled roofs, men rushing about bareheaded, women in their *kimonos* walking more sedately; no noisy trams, waggons, or motor cars, no noise except that caused by the talk of the people and the gentle rattle of the rickishas. Imagine all this, and you have the view of Yokohama.

Fancy yourself for the first time in a strange land where everything is novel. You see a new race of people who have different manners and customs from your own, people who are smaller in stature than what you have been used to, clad in costumes brilliantly coloured that you have only previously pictured in your imagination; you will see jinrickishas—small carriages drawn by men instead of animals—you have

only heard about, houses you have read about and longed to see. The word house is hardly descriptive of what they really look like. Small, low, flat-roofed, one-storied houses with picturesque roofs, sometimes overgrown with plants, and windows made of lattice-work covered with oiled paper, through which, if you are of a destructive disposition, you can put your finger with ease. You will see rows of wooden shoes and sandals standing on the doorstep ready to serve their owners when they come out again; people walking about the streets with large yellow paper umbrellas open, to keep the sun or rain off them.

Form an imaginative picture of all this in your mind. Get into a rickisha with a coolie instead of a horse to draw the carriage, imagine yourself being pulled through the streets where everything is novel and quaint, shops exhibiting wares you have longed to possess: you become fascinated. Imagine yourself being pulled up hills in this small vehicle. Glance around and see the plants and flowers, the hills fresh with spring foliage, the people in costumes your imagination has merely pictured, colours such as you hardly dared think of. You are alone in your carriage, and so have no one to draw your attention from what you are seeing, and, being alone, you can think—your



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1. STREET SCENE IN YOKOHAMA.



undivided attention can be fixed on what you behold. See the people in the fields working with a will—both sexes, all ages; dart in your carriage through villages, the shops hung with sign-boards variously coloured, houses with flags bearing the sign of the sun—the national emblem; out into the fields again or through a wood, a brook of clear, gentle, running water on one side, trees and blossoms on the other; and so you can travel for miles, each hour, each moment even, affording you new pleasures; every minute you fancy you are face to face with the most wonderful piece of scenery you have ever seen. Days seem to pass so quickly that you can barely concentrate your mind on any individual thing. One day you dart in a rickisha through streets and lanes, over hills and down dales; another day you find yourself seated in a flat-bottomed boat rushing down streams, with the banks on either side one mass of colouring. At Arashiyama the hills on either side of the river in spring are covered with cherry blossoms, and later in the year their place is taken by trees of azaleas, all colours ranging from white to mauve and mauve to red, and here and there the red of the maple leaf, which in autumn turns to bright copper.

The river lends itself to all manner of excite-



ment. Charter a flat-bottomed boat with three or four men and shoot the rapids; to see the boat shooting round corners every moment one fancies it must be dashed against the rocks, but so clever are the steerers that an accident is a rarity. The bottom of the boat creaks and bends as she rushes down with the stream. No two bits of scenery are alike, at every turn a picture more beautiful than the last comes into view. In some places the water is only a few inches deep, but the impetus the boat receives coming through the rapid places takes it even over places where the water is conspicuous by its scarcity. The river Fujikawa is navigable for more than forty miles, and in just over four hours we traversed it, starting from Yokaichiba and landing without stop at Iwabuchi; at one moment only the white top of Fuji is visible in the distance, then again shooting round another bend the whole mountain stands out in full glory. It takes the men four days to tow their boat up stream again. Hundreds of men can be seen towing their boats up with ropes, bending double under the strain, and at nights they are forced to fasten their crafts and seek shelter along the banks. The tariff for a trip down the river is five yen, which is equivalent to about ten shillings—it makes one ask oneself how these people live, on what

they subsist. In all it takes four men five days to go down and up again, five days of hard work, work almost verging on slavery, and each man earns in those five days two shillings and sixpence. Their staple food is rice, and on that and biscuits, with occasionally a piece of fish, they seem to thrive. One seldom beholds a half-starved creature, such as one sees in England; their clothes are always neat, never in rags; whatever clothing they have on, though it may be scanty, is neatly girdled and tidy.

The light effects, the most wonderful of nature's arts, coming down these rivers are always changing, no two moments are they the same. A cloud may for a moment obliterate the sun, thereby making the scene look cold, the rush of water and its accompanying roar appear more noticeable; the flowers seem to have lost much of their splendour, they, too, look as if they required something to instil fresh life into them; until suddenly the sun will burst out again, casting his warm and brilliant light on the surroundings, illuminating the scene and making everything look even more beautiful than it did before. The shadows, which when the sun was veiled had disappeared, now cast long streaks of darkness over the water, and give out those wonderful contrasts of light.

The lines of Shelley, when he describes how everything mingles together, come back to one as one sits gazing at the surrounding beauty, intent only on the present, unheeding the future—

> "The fountains mingle with the rivers,
> And the rivers with the ocean."

And when he describes nature and her wonders, as only a poet can, in the lines—

> "See the mountains touch high heaven
> And the waves clasp one another,"

one is left to one's reverie until suddenly roused by the shrill cry of the boatman as he rounds a corner—a cry like that of a Venetian gondolier—warning an upcoming boat lest the two should collide; but beyond that cry of warning and the sound of rushing water an absolute peace reigns.

On our tour down the Fujikawa we accommodated a little Japanese lady, the wife of the hotel manager at Yokaichiba, with a place in our boat. The pangs of fear this poor little lady experienced were amusing to behold; she hardly dared raise her eyes from the bottom of the boat, where she remained squatting on her heels for more than four hours. Whenever a dangerous passage presented itself, or the boat shot



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2. A MOUNTAIN TORRENT.



more rapidly than usual over boulders, our little friend bowed herself in prayer to Buddha, chanting to herself the whole time. The gratitude she showered on us, when we reached our destination, for accompanying her down the river was touching; a prince could not have received greater homage than we received. To be of service to a Japanese is a supreme pleasure.

For three weeks we travelled inland, with no one but a Japanese coolie to accompany us; he acted as spokesman and interpreter, wherever his deficient knowledge of the English language permitted of such a thing. He was also luggage man in chief, and carried the stores for three weeks, whilst at the rate of a shilling a day he hired the services of any coolie he could find to shoulder the small amount of baggage we took with us. The wage this man received was seventy-five sen per diem, equivalent to about one shilling and sixpence, and, after being paid two evenings in succession, he asked whether we minded keeping the rest for him until the end of the three weeks. He paid his own lodging bill, food, everything, and subsisted for three weeks on three shillings; his excuses for not requiring payment every day were that his pockets were not large enough to hold so much

money, and that three shillings was ample for his requirements during the period for which we had engaged him. I believe he considered himself a young Crœsus when at Gotemba we parted and he received the twenty-eight shillings and sixpence balance due to him.

Most days we walked about fifteen or twenty miles, no horses or rickishas being available anywhere in the interior of the country. Fortunately we halted at places like Lake Shoji, where European food to a certain extent was obtainable, and so we were enabled to replenish our provision basket, which at times ran very low. Sometimes we had to write a few days ahead to larger towns asking them to forward bread to some small place where we contemplated staying the night, because to obtain bread in the interior is almost an impossibility.

By walking through the country we were enabled to admire and see its beauties much better than had we gone by train, and to admire the flowers and the wonderful tints of the trees, which varied in colour from yellow to copper. The hillsides were at times covered with cherry blossoms, which, at a distance, made the country look as if it were enveloped in snow, or as if the trees were covered with hoar-

frost, and on approaching the scene the sun's rays cast a warm glow over the light pink blossoms and made the hills look as if they were blazing with a colour, indescribably soft and beautiful in tone.

To pass through small villages without in many cases a single shop, villages to which few Europeans ever found their way, was extremely interesting, not only to ourselves, but, from the apparent amusement of the villagers, interesting to them also. They all rushed out of their houses to see the travellers; an electric spark seemed to pass through the community whenever we approached, informing it of visitors. The children used our legs as bridges, to their immense enjoyment, and amused themselves by darting in and out of our lower limbs, whilst the taller generations would be so struck by our heights that they would measure theirs against us; sometimes with outstretched arms they could not even reach our heads. It makes one often think that small things please small minds, but if a pigmy is seen walking down Piccadilly, or a Chinaman crossing Trafalgar Square, are they not also the centre of amusement? People stand still to look at them, and the street arabs probably mock them in derision, the midget for his minute stature and the Chinaman because he wears a pigtail. In Japan they

look upon you as a curiosity, but are not so ill-bred as to mock either your height, or what seems to them even more curious, your fair hair.

Sometimes in June swamps of lotus flowers can be seen, not planted so that each colour is separate from the rest, but *en masse*, the whole a wonderful piece of colouring, thousands of blossoms all out at one time, hardly two colours exactly the same, people standing in the midst of them weeding them out or picking the flowers to send to the larger towns for the market. The colours of the *kimonos* stand out against the softer tones of the lotus flowers, the pickers mostly with a soft piece of linen tied gracefully round their heads, after the fashion of a Dutch cap, to shelter them from the heat of the sun and to keep the perspiration from dropping into their eyes. Every one seems busy, running about as if he had the work of the world on his shoulders; and whilst the women and children pick or sort out the flowers, the men carry buckets of manure to cultivate the ground, or transport cans of water from the wells and water the plants. I think I can truthfully say that I never, during my whole stay in Japan, saw a man idle. Sometimes in the towns one may see a beggar, but he is so old and infirm that work would be impossible.

At some of the larger places, where tea-houses are prominently placed along the roadside, can be seen those wonderful arbours of wistaria, purple and white blossoms hanging down in masses from the trellis-work above; sometimes whole verandahs surround the houses, literally covered with this magnificent flower. To sit underneath one of these arbours and admire the surrounding country is enchanting; no sun can penetrate the trellis-work on account of the masses of flowers, and later, on account of the covering caused by the thickly-grown leaves. Under these bowers one can sit all day watching the streets with their interesting people passing, or the gardens magnificently laid out and wonderfully well kept. It is almost impossible to find a weed on the grass, or an ugly twig on a tree. The tea-house keeper probably takes a morning constitutional with his family round his garden, to see whether the night has brought out anything to offend the most critical, and if so, that offending twig or weed is plucked up and thrown away where it can never again make itself objectionable.

At one tea-house, called Gammon-ga-fuchi, where the gardens are perhaps finer than anywhere else in Japan, I took no less than twelve photographs, all

different, and each looking as if it might have been a portion of an enormous park, whereas in two minutes you could walk over the whole "estate." So artistically are these arranged, with their diminutive hills, planted with tiny shrubs in many cases a few inches only in height, but perhaps hundreds of years old, and their toy temples and small stone *torii*, an exact representation of the real temples at Nikko, that one almost imagines oneself in some palace grounds.

When I visited Gammon-ga-fuchi I was fortunate enough to fall in with a party of Japanese who had walked out from Nikko along the bank of the Daiya-gawa, and were having a picnic at the tea-house. I asked whether I might take their photograph, and, in return for a promise of a copy to some of their leaders, was entertained in a most lavish manner. Nothing could have exceeded the hospitality I received from these comparatively poor men, manufacturers and artisans. Beer, bottle after bottle, was brought, in which they insisted on drinking my health. I was forced to partake of their cakes and sweetmeats; they insisted on my smoking their cigarettes, and endeavoured to make me understand their language. What other nation would treat a stranger in this way?

The names given to Japan are numerous, but it is still impossible to find one that embraces the whole charm of the country—the Land of Flowers, the Land of the Rising Sun, and many others—but none of them convey to one's mind all that one feels about the place. The country is a garden of colour, whether flowers or leaves, but so also is the country the land of the rising sun; both appellations are correct, and still in each there is something wanting.

Ask European residents in Japan how they like the country and what they think of the people? Personally, I seldom heard a foreigner say anything in favour of either. But then one must realise that Japan has much sameness, much want of variety; one place is more or less like another, one piece of sea as blue as its neighbour, and one garden barely differs from the next one. To a person who only spends a short time there the monotony is not felt, because there is always something novel to notice and be interested in; but to a person who has lived many years in Japan, and who has gone over to the country with the intention of settling there for some length of time, the monotony is apparent, probably because he remains very much in one place and never travels about in search of interest. The average

resident has hardly been further than a few miles from the town he lives in. He puts it off, thinking he can always go to such-and-such a place, or else he accumulates the holiday allowed him every year by his firm for three or five years, and comes home to Europe again to see his friends. These residents have probably less to say in favour of the people than in favour of the country, but then that is probably owing to a feeling of jealousy, because they find it hard to compete with them in trade, on account of the people's dishonesty, and in art, because they themselves have not such a fine feeling of what is artistic. They attempt to imitate the arrangement of the Japanese houses and find it a hopeless task, they want to arrange fans on their walls, and discover that whichever way they turn them they look stiff and ugly, whilst a Japanese in a few moments in his own house would arrange those same fans in such a way that no one could find fault with the arrangement.

Each month has its descriptive blossom. The plum blossoms come out at the end of January and last into March, even before many trees show signs of shooting, and give one such wonderful impressions of the beauties of the hillsides, that one imagines what it must be when all the trees are covered with



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3. THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS.



leaves. At times the plum trees are few and far between, which makes them all the more beautiful, their large, snow-white petals shining in the light of a wintry sun.

April brings out the cherry blossoms, when the whole nation makes holiday and turns out to admire the colour. Tokyo and Kioto have long avenues where there are no other trees and no other blossoms. Standing at one end and looking down the line one sees nothing but the wonderful soft tones of these flowers. Occasionally one finds a cake stall along the side of the road with an old woman under a gigantic paper umbrella selling her sweetmeats; sometimes one comes across an open space of ground, where seats are placed at the expense of the town, and on which the Japanese sit crowded together admiring the wonders of nature. On a specified day every man, woman, and child turns out to see this sight, and practically to worship what they see. The young children are told legends about their forefathers many hundreds of years ago. Each year they are told the same story and yet each year they listen with open mouth and bated breath to the same deeds of heroism; they commit it to memory, and when they have children of their own, relate the same story, so that the legends never die.

One of the salient features of Japanese life are these annual festal days, when the whole population turns out, and every child has a small branch of cherry blossom. In the larger towns the *geisha* perform the wonderful cherry dance, as it is called, where every girl, with a perfect branch of those wonderful flowers, dances in unison with her fellow-dancers. There is never a hitch or a forgotten step; the *kimonos* are of most extravagant colours, and yet colours that blend and harmonise with the blossoms and the surrounding scene. Sometimes fifteen or twenty of these little girls dance together; each turn is studied with unending patience; one can hardly see any individual step because their movements are so slow and graceful; one can only see and admire the movement as a whole.

Towards the end of April and beginning of May the wistarias begin to take the place of the cherry blossoms; every tea-house and garden has its arbour hung with masses of flowers, and the surrounding hills are covered with azalea trees luxuriant with the softness of their colours.

One month the banks of a river will be pink with cherry blossoms and the next white and mauve with thousands of azaleas. So quick are the changes that

there is never an interval when the country looks bare and devoid of colour.

June will see the fields covered with irises ranging from white to scarlet, every colour of the spectrum almost, and still each so perfect in tone that none can be called hard; acres upon acres of flowers such as the imagination of man can hardly picture, thousands and tens of thousands of flowers forming a carpet over the fields. These again are superseded by the large peony, which is mostly white, though in China, where it is grown in great abundance, almost any colour can be seen, even black. The average peony has a diameter of six inches, and sometimes the plant grows to a height of several feet, covered with blooms.

Thus each month has its own particular flower until the autumn comes and changes the leaves of the trees from green to brown and brown to yellow. The maple leaf, red in spring, turns a bright copper, and that tree, dotted as it is amongst the more subdued colours of the autum tints, relieves the whole.

Towards the end of October the greatest show of flowers comes into season, the flower for which, above all others, Japan has made a name—the chrysanthemum. Banks, tier above tier, of these wonderful flowers can be seen in Tokyo. The Mikado gives an annual

garden fête every year at Akasaka, to which he invites the society of Japan to witness the show; it is probably the finest in the world. At Dangozaka, also in Tokyo, the plants are one mass of bloom, and many have several differently coloured flowers growing from the same root, the result of many years' patience and careful grafting. Some are larger than soup plates, the petals forming a complete semi-circle; others, with petals curving inwards, resemble an enormous ball. Every colour and every shape of flower imaginable is displayed there. Sometimes all the buds except one are nipped, and instead of hundreds, and even thousands, of flowers blossoming on one plant, only one will be left, but that one a triumph in size, the horticulturist's pride. These flowers last well into November, the finest flower in Japan and the last of the year. It heralds the winter; with it the leaves begin to fall, the trees become bare, rain and snow follow in the footsteps of sunshine and flowers, disease and unhappiness take the place of health and joy. The flowers and green trees and all the pleasures that accompany them can remain only in the memory, whilst the short bleak days and cold nights of a winter, shorter, but not very different from our own, are bound to run their accustomed course. Every-



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4. A TEA GARDEN AT NIKKŌ.



thing that was beautiful seems lost in oblivion, but the recollection remains.

Still I think the remembrance of the beauties of spring, summer, and autumn, which have passed away, the recollection of the warm full spring days when the trees first show signs of green, the hotter summer when everything is in its perfection, and the autumn with its lengthening nights; the nine months from March to November which have been months of pleasure, happiness, and contentment, months of toil and labour which the people have passed through, helps them to survive the winter months and to be contented. Their souls have had their fill of the wonders of nature, their hearts have been satiated with the natural beauties they have seen, and they live content to await the advent of spring and the joyous return of warmth.

Their houses are badly adapted to the severities of winter; the walls are thin and mostly of wood; paper takes the place of panes of glass to keep out the cold winds and snow; a small jar (*hibachi*) filled with red-hot charcoal has to serve them instead of a fireplace. Over these movable fires they squat in a circle, and try to keep the cold out of their bodies, sipping the while hot brewed tea or hot *saké*, imagining that they are happy, and never permitting their minds to dwell

on the horrors of cold and poor food. The Japanese have such an extraordinary power over their feelings that, however miserable they feel, to a spectator they appear the very essence of happiness and joy.

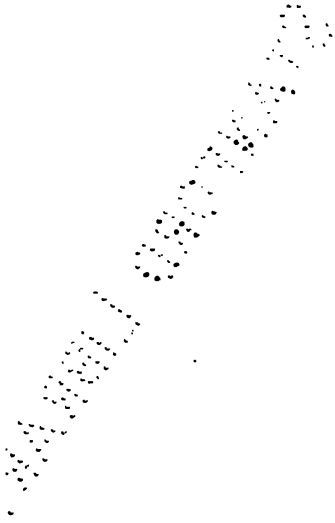
When I visited the country I made a tour on foot from Gotemba round the base of Fujiyama, the sacred mount of Japan. From every side I was able to see it, and from every side it seemed to look more beautiful. Sometimes a boat would ferry us across a lake, and there Fuji's image would be reflected in the water, its snow-clad top looming out against a deep blue sky. From every quarter I was enabled to admire it, and at every hour of the day from early morn, when the sun, rising behind the mountain, caused it to throw long shadows on the ground—shadows which, as the sun rose higher in the heavens, diminished until almost overhead his glorious rays spread over the mountain, illuminating the snow to greater brilliancy —to late in the evening when the sun was sinking, causing the snow to vary from white to pink; and back again to white, when the sun set and the twilight had faded. Then the moon would rise, causing the mountain to look totally changed again. Instead of a cold white snow after the first darkness had set in, a silvery glimmer would appear, the reflections in the



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5. MOUNT FUJIYAMA.





lakes clearer even and more distinct now that the wind had dropped; no sound to disturb the mind and destroy the impressions and feelings; an absolute stillness reigned. The whole scene was one almost of overpowering solitude, no one near, no sound of voices, nothing but the view of Fujiyama, ever changing and yet ever more beautiful.

Numbers of poems have been dedicated to this wonderful mountain, and amongst the finest is one written about the tenth century A.D., of which Mr. Basil Hall Chamberlain gives an adequate rendering in one of his books:—

"What name might fitly tell, what accents sing,
Thine awful, godlike grandeur? 'Tis thy breast
That holdeth Narusawa's flood at rest,
Thy side whence Fujikawa's waters spring.

Great Fusiyama, towering to the sky!
A treasure art thou given to mortal man,
A God Protector watching o'er Japan:
On thee for ever let me feast mine eye."

Tradition tells us that Fuji sprang up in one night, and that Lake Biwa, about a hundred miles to the east of Kioto, sank at the same time. The mountain itself is volcanic, and was last seen in eruption at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In shape it

resembles a sugar cone, perfect in form. It is almost surrounded by rivers and lakes, and appears towering above everything, a solitary mass of snow and rock; no other mountain or even hill of any size within sight of it. It may be its solitary grandeur that appeals to one, or it may be the unique shape of the mountain; no other mountain in the world impresses one as Fuji does. In midsummer thousands of pilgrims ascend it, and pray the whole way up. The goddess of the mountain, called Ko-no-Hana-Saku-ya-Hime, which means "Princess who makes the Flowers of the Trees to blossom," is worshipped there. She is more often called Sengen or Asama, and has many shrines dedicated to her. The pilgrims when they ascend are usually clothed in white, and carry bells with which they invoke the gods.

The height of the mountain is not so great, only 12,500 feet, but what impresses one is the fact that it stands all alone, and therefore appears much bigger.

The first time I saw Fuji again after landing at Yokohama was at about 5 A.M. I had taken the train from Nagoya bound for Kodzu, near Miyanoshita. There was no sleeping-car attached to the train, so I had to content myself with the seat for a bed. I

remember we stopped at a small station in the early morning, and, on opening my eyes, I saw out of the window the sun rise behind Fuji; the whole country seemed on fire, the snow of the mountain a vivid pink, the blossoms on all the trees round lit up by the morning sun. It was a sight no one, no matter how devoid of feeling, could forget. No man could see that sight and not feel its charm. I had barely time thoroughly to take in the scene—everything seemed to surge through my brain at once—when the train started off again, and Fuji was lost in the distance. That one view of the mountain decided my further plans. I felt I could not leave Japan without going round it, and felt equally certain that the charm of it, and the impressions I had formed on first acquaintance, could only be strengthened by a longer sojourn in its vicinity.

Even as the flowers of Japan are unique, not only in variety but in splendour; even as the people and their costumes are descriptive of the country, so also is Fujiyama the one and only mountain, unsurpassed in beauty.



CHAPTER II

THE ART OF JAPAN

No country in the world is probably so artistic as Japan; the inhabitants from their earliest childhood are taught to love nature, and from that the finest art springs. A glimpse at their gardens, perhaps not larger than a few square yards, but made to look like parks; everything in harmony, tiny wooden bridges, too small for any human being to stand on, built across a stream a few inches broad, with water rippling over bright pebbles, shows one the perfection to which art in nature can be brought. There are special artists in Japan who make a study of laying out these gardens; they make plans, suggest stones, and the colour of the fish to be placed in the ponds. If you are staying at a tea-house, slide back the paper windows and look out. The sight that presents itself is one not easily to be forgotten—I am taking my picture from a small tea-house at Mogi, near Nagasaki. In front the sea, indescribably



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6. A BRONZE VESSEL.



blue, a sky with barely a cloud, the gentle sound of an incoming tide, waves splashing against the rocks on which one can see natives sitting contemplating the beauties around them; below the window a garden, small in its dimensions, yet appearing so large, small ponds with goldfish, diminutive bridges spanning model streams a few inches only in breadth, the water running over stones or rocks in imitation of a waterfall, stone *torii* in front of a toy temple, the whole garden an imitation of a wonderfully laid out park. Turn round again and see the empty room; you cannot help but admire that one *kakemono* hanging on the wall, or that one vase of blossoms, because there is nothing else in the room to attract your attention.

In that one day, in those few hours, if my pen has been able to picture to your imagination this scene, you have beheld Nature in all her glory. Those few hours have been hours of pure enjoyment; they have been, in fact, life, because life and nature have been at work hand in hand. Where nature has been deficient in the artistic sense, human hand has helped to make good the deficiency, and should nature have produced anything out of sympathy with its surroundings, the hand of man has,

in Japan, assisted to make the whole scene a most beautiful picture.

In small things the Japanese are wonderfully artistic, no country can paint china better, or carve more perfectly, whether in ivory or wood; but in big things they seem to lose themselves entirely, and flounder trying to imitate what they do not understand. Their own native buildings are ugly, but their imitation of a European house is uglier still.

A Japanese seldom paints or draws from nature. He sees what he wishes to paint, studies it with his eyes, and commits it to memory, before he attempts to put it on paper or on silk. Thus paintings on screens, or *kakemonos*, are the work of a few minutes; a few quick flourishes of the brush and the thing is finished. Their ideas of perspective are terrible; a house may as well, according to them, rest on nothing, or be built in the sky, so long as the finished picture is something artistic. They hate being bound by certain laws, whether of perspective or colour. They seldom paint anything with finished lines; the whole is a sort of vignetted picture, and the lines dwindle off into infinity. I once saw a picture of Mount Fujiyama by a celebrated Japanese artist, showing the mountain indistinctly visible above a rising mist,

and two dragons having a death-struggle below. Each — the mountain and the beasts — was marvellously executed, every detail exact, but the whole looked an impossibility; a mountain does not, except in a nightmare, recline gracefully on the chests of rampant dragons. The Japanese are idealists; they form ideas, and those ideas they reproduce without working upon any fundamental rules. The result may seem to us stiff and unnatural, but it is true to those ideas, though it may not be always true to nature. An artist will sometimes watch a bird or a goldfish for days, studying some particular bend of the head or curve of the tail; after each day he will have noticed one thing, and have retained every line in his memory, and when he gets home in the evening will draw what he remembers. Day after day he will go to the same spot untiringly and watch, until at length the whole of what he wanted to reproduce is impressed on his mind, and that he draws.

Paintings by the old Japanese artists cannot be bought; they are as jealously guarded in Japan as the Italian masterpieces are in Italy. What are bought, and bought by the thousands, are wonderfully well imitated old *kakemonos*, so well produced that it would take a connoisseur to tell them from

the originals. The gold is made to look several hundreds of years old, the silk threads of an embroidery are so carefully worked as to be in places bare, to trick the buyer and induce him to believe he has caught a wonderful bargain.

Japanese art has undoubtedly sprung from China *viâ* Korea. An extraordinary fact about it is, that the period when Japanese art was at its highest, the art of Europe was also at its best. At that period, between 1500 and 1600 A.D., most of the art of Japan was of a scriptural nature, the priests in most cases being the artists. Art itself has probably originated with religion; the attempts made to build temples and shrines to the gods has been in nearly all countries the commencement of art. Witness the art of Greece. They first fashioned statues impersonating some god, or built temples in which they could worship their divinity. The same in Egypt. All the art in that country, at least the art that has been handed down to us, has sprung from the wish of the people to appease their gods by dedicating some beautiful shrine to them.

The finest European architecture is seen in churches, and the zenith both of architecture and art throughout the world was in the fifteenth century. Since that



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7. BASKET MAKING.



time, especially in Europe, it has been on the downward grade, partly owing to the more matter-of-fact tastes of the people, partly owing to the decrease of artistic feeling, and partly through religion becoming every day less of a worship than it was.

The more established a religion, the greater is the artistic taste displayed in its temples and churches, which makes itself again felt in the artistic tastes of the nation. Through the numerous sects and denominations of the Christian religion much of the art which was formerly in vogue has been lost. Churches are no longer in Europe adorned and embellished as they used to be in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mark the grandeur and magnificence of some of the churches in Rome, which were built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and compare them with the more modern churches. It is possible that the decline of this art is due to the churches having less money at their disposal than they had, but is probably accounted for by the fact that whereas the Roman Catholic Church is the oldest, and was then almost universal, now so many sects and denominations have sprung up, all professing the same belief, but worshipping in different manners, that the money which would

formerly have gone to enrich the Church of Rome is utilised by the individual churches to whom it is bequeathed or given.

It may appear from this that I wish to suggest that the continuance of the art of Japan is due to religion; but that I do not believe to be true, any more than I suggest that the decline in European art is due to the decrease in religious feeling. Japanese art, like our own, emanated from a wish to glorify the Buddhist or Christian deity, and was commenced in both cases by the teachers and propagators of those religions; but in the one case it took a deeper root, and has lasted longer, because the contaminating influences of the civilised world have not yet had sufficient time to stamp it out; in the other case—that is, in our own—art has decreased, and, to a great extent, I suggest, because of the religious differences which exist in the Christian community.

The whole art of Japan is based on the unconventional method with which they go to work. The absolute indifference they exhibit for any rules has probably gone a great step towards making their art so fascinating, because being essentially unconventional they appeal to Europeans as something novel.

To return again to the art of the country, an art

which is sometimes termed the only remaining Living Art. Some travellers, I think, are so much carried away by what they see in Japan that they force themselves to believe that art has failed to exist in any other country. I am willing to admit and firmly believe that no other nation in the world can compete with them in art as a nation, but does that mean that our modern artists fail to produce effects, paintings, or sculptures as fine as anything in Japan? The art of Europe cannot be compared with Japanese art; they are too different. Our modern painters copy models, or paint landscapes, or, like Mr. Watts, insert heads or figures of living persons into a picture of pure fiction. In Japan the artist aims merely at effects; he sees and learns what he wants to paint, and, having mastered his subject, reproduces what he has seen in colour. One seldom sees a Japanese artist with canvas and easel painting a temple or waterfall, however picturesque it may appear to him. His painting is merely an impression, wonderfully executed, with as few strokes of his brush as possible.

Two meanings can be given to the term Living Art: the one is art which is so true to nature that it impresses the mind as something living, that stands out, and that, when looked at from a distance gives

one the impression not of so much paint on a piece of paper, but of life itself. I once saw in Japan a painting of a flight of birds so accurately reproduced that one almost imagined each bird had breath and power of flight. Is that the meaning of Living Art, and the only meaning? I contend that Living Art may also mean art which, though executed hundreds of years ago, is still as beautiful to the modern eye as it was then. Does not the art of Italy, the art of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, and the many others still exist? Is it not to this day imitated, if imitation of art is possible? Go to the Sistine Chapel, or visit the Raphael Stanze in the Vatican at Rome. Is that art dead? Can art lie dormant? It must be either dead or living. If this latter definition of Living Art is correct, surely, then, the art of Japan is not the only Living Art? If a picture is capable of appealing to the soul as something real, capable even of speaking to one and touching the core of one's heart, as pictures in Europe by ancient and modern painters do, how then can art be dead?

The Japanese as a nation are universally artistic; one cannot enter a Japanese house and find fault with any particular thing: each *kakemono* is in accordance with its surroundings. In the choice of these *kake-*

monos the Japanese are most careful. Seldom is more than one hung in a room, prominently placed, and still not so prominently as to attract the eye at once, perhaps hung on a side wall instead of immediately opposite the door. Alongside it the guest will find a vase artistically arranged with blossoms of such a colour as not to clash with the painting. The arrangement of these branches of blossoms is the work of hours sometimes; a branch of cherry blossoms must be arranged to look as if it were growing, a pot of lotus flowers placed to make one believe them to be in a state of nature. Every one who has given this subject (the art of arrangement) a thought, will know how hard it is to place several stiff branches of cherry blossoms in a vase artistically. I have watched small children in Japan, sitting on their heels, bending a twig here or a leaf there, ever and again leaning back to watch the effect, heating the stems to make them more pliable; with unending patience they will work until the whole is complete. The arrangement looks as if it had been a matter of chance; the flowers seem to grow, each leaf and branch bend so gracefully that one is forced to believe it to have been a work of love, a labour for art's sake. In private houses the floral decorations are often under-

taken each day by men who have given their whole lives to it. Children are taught from their earliest childhood, and even to them it is no toilsome labour, but by patience—and with that they are gifted—they all in the end succeed.

You may walk for miles in Japan, and at each bend of the road an effect more striking than the former one will present itself. Should a stream not harmonise with a mountain it will have its course altered; should an inartistic tree have the insolence to grow on a hillside covered with mauve and white azaleas it will be cut down by the neighbouring inhabitants. Nothing may look out of place.

A Japanese will sometimes walk miles or climb a mountain to watch a sunset from a particular spot. Imagine an English farmer or a farm labourer, after a day's work, climbing some mountain in Wales to watch a sunset or to obtain a view of some distant landscape. His friends and relations would that evening meet together and consult as to what brain specialist he should see, or would say he was in love; they would invent any excuse except the correct one—that his life was empty without some feeling of natural beauty. Few of the poorer people at home can imagine that the soul may require something beyond

the ordinary, some gift not produced by man but by nature. If a nation is artistic, it lives for its art; if a country has no love of art, it must of necessity indulge in some other form of recreation; and too often, I fear, that recreation is found in a public-house or gambling-den, the beginning of the end—man's certain degradation. Art can even be carried to such a pitch that drunkenness itself becomes artistic—the greatest living artist in Japan executes his best work when drunk with *saké*. Not only is his touch bolder, but he is also carried away by an imagination at all times excitable, but which when he is drunk becomes something almost superhuman. His paintings become weird. His drunkenness is not that of an imbecile, not that of a man who becomes sleepy in his cups, a sluggard or soaker, but rather that of a madman, mad only in his art, his brain on fire, his soul inspired by the aid of drink, longing to make use of his talent, and to place on record what his drunken mind has pictured. It is hard to walk through the streets of Yokohama, Tokyo, or any large town at night, without seeing a single drunken man; but one never expects to see, nor can one see every third person drunk as one can any night in the year in most of the poorer parts of London or of any large town; and what one will

never see in Japan — the most loathsome sight for any man to behold—a woman drunk, no matter of what station in life.

The Japanese women from their birth are taught to be artistic. A mother's first care, after her child is born, is the preparation of its *kimono;* the younger the child the brighter the colour chosen for its dress. The richer the mother the purer the silk, the more unique the design; each child's dress will have some befitting colour according to the month in which it is born, and no expense is spared, no sacrifice too great to attain that end. Small children of five and six years old will carry their smaller brothers and sisters strapped like a knapsack on their backs, and those who have no brothers or sisters will have a doll substituted; and so they are taught, whilst still almost babies themselves, to tend and care for the younger ones. Until they marry their great aim is to look beautiful, to attract the admiration of their friends, both men and women; their hair is artistically arranged, so saturated with oil as to make it almost impossible of untidiness. It is very seldom taken down or combed, perhaps once a week, and then only by an expert hairdresser, whose task it is to rearrange it; the placing of the gold lacquered combs is a work of art,



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8. A GROUP OF JAPANESE.

[redacted]

[redacted]

and here and there can be seen a flower just visible under the dark folds of their hair. How much more beautiful is all this — a becoming dress, exquisite in colour and design, richly embroidered; the *obi* (sash) neatly fixed at the back, and held in place by a thin piece of silk cord; every colour perfect in tone; no boots to injure the anatomy of the foot, or high heels, only a simple straw sandal covered with felt, on to which the foot is fixed by means of placing the big and first toe between a piece of cord; no hat to spoil the *tout ensemble* — how much more beautiful, I say, is all this than a European dress, in most cases chosen without a particle of taste, and a hat to match—a hat, forsooth! I feel almost ashamed to apply such a word to a flower-garden surrounded by enormous ostrich feathers—few colours harmonising, everything clashing. Pockets neither the European nor the Japanese ladies seem to have, but the latter people use the sleeves of their *kimonos* as a receptacle for whatever they wish to put there; the former class either lose that for which they require a pocket, or do without the necessary articles.

All is not gold that glitters, and even in Japan —the country about which so many have raved, and about which so few have had anything but good to

tell—everything is not perfect; but then what country or man is perfect. Go to Ōsaka and climb into a jinrickisha; the coolie need not pull you far before the unpleasant odours of the place become perceptible, odours the like of which I have experienced only in one other place, namely, in the native Chinese town of Canton. The Japanese will tell you in perfect good faith that these odours are quite healthy; that, however, is small comfort to the particular organ to which they are perceptible. The town is intersected by canals into which all manner of filth is thrown; bridges span these canals, and whilst crossing them the odour seemed worse. Having lived all my life in a town, the smells hardly affected my nasal organs as much as those of my friend with whom I visited the city. He was fresh from the Australian bush, where, according to him, the air is always wafted straight from heaven, with no contaminating influences to affect it.

In most Japanese villages the smells are not of the sweetest, but any inconvenience derived from them is fully compensated for by the interest to be found there and the beauties to be seen at every street corner.

Whilst going through the towns I saw most of the works of art being manufactured. The *Satsuma*

at Kobe, earthenware pots most wonderfully painted—whole scenes of country life, whole stories depicted on small vases—requiring for their inspection a strong magnifying glass, and yet the men who paint them do so in many cases without even spectacles. One small cup, three inches in diameter, was shown me having painted on it five hundred butterflies, the colour of almost every one different, and yet each perfect in form and design. On one vase a procession entering a temple was depicted showing one hundred and fifty people, each face wonderful in outline and expression, each dress magnificently coloured, and so distinctly painted that the silk cord fastening the *obi* was clearly visible on many. The eyesight of these *Satsuma* artists, I fear, is short lived; a few years is about the limit of time that those delicate organs can withstand the strain. To see them bending double over their work—the vase or whatever is being painted being fixed in position on a stool—is wonderful, small children running from one artist to another carrying or mixing fresh paints. Their paints also are different to those used in other countries; they are mostly ground into powder and slowly mixed with water, some few being used with a small amount of gum-arabic.

Satsuma painting was at its height in the first half

of the last century when the most exquisite works were executed. Every museum in Europe, and in fact every private collection, boasts of numerous pieces of *Satsuma* crackled ware, all bound to be genuine because they have been collected by experts and high prices paid for them. The higher the price paid or demanded, the more likely (according to the collector) is the article to be genuine. An American will pay hundreds of pounds (a mere nothing to him) for a piece of *Satsuma* merely because the clever Japanese salesman has it wrapped in paper, linen, cotton wool, and innumerable boxes lest such a valuable article should be broken. He is duped into buying an apparent imitation because it is so expensive.

To give a personal illustration, I purchased a very neat set of picnic utensils in Japan, an imitation of the Nankin china so many people rave about, each article fitted one inside the other, and the whole was contained in a small wooden box with sliding front. I was showing a dealer (one of the biggest in England) my collection, and produced this thing which had cost 1½ yen (3s.), as the *pièce de résistance*, the most priceless treasure in my collection. The connoisseur handled it as he would a baby, turned it over and over, remarked on the beauty of the blue, said it was

priceless, and even named a fabulous figure (not for purchase); and when I told him it had only cost three shillings and was an imitation, he said he thought it was, but feared to offend me. Thus man is duped.

The damascene work is another great industry of the country, and is best carried on at Kioto. It consists of the finest gold threads worked into other metals. The vessel is bronze or iron, and after the image has been drawn on it, the lines are engraved upon the metal with a sharp engraving tool in a dovetail form, and then the incisions are filled with fine gold wires. The industry is of great antiquity, and was practised in Rome many centuries ago; shields were then produced with wars depicted on them in gold and silver. The most intricate work is by this means accomplished in Japan. Cases of gun-metal watches receive beautifully worked patterns or initials in gold and silver. At first the manufactured article appears rough, the gold wire protruding too far from the incisions, but soon, with a small emery wheel, the gold is filed down and polished until the whole is an even surface.

I saw a small temple, not more than a few inches high, having the finishing touches applied; it had taken the damascene workers twenty years to com-

plete. The whole was a most wonderful work of art, everything correct in every detail, exactly resembling one of the chief Shinto temples at Nikkō.

Kioto is the chief town for the manufacture of works of art, priceless bronzes, wood carvings so magnificently coloured as to resemble the works of the finest clay workers. The modern carvings, however, cannot, though still beautiful to our eyes, be compared with some of the carvings of former centuries on the temples at Nikkō. It is hard to believe that carvings such as one sees there can be the work of human hands. At one temple the carving is so deep that birds are depicted life size, one peacock, I remember, at the temple of Yakushi standing out from the background with his tail forming the most perfect fan, each feather exactly carved, the neck craning forward as if ready to pick up food; the depth of the carving from the beak of the bird to the background was 8½ inches. Other smaller birds, standing on a ledge or perched on a branch, surrounded the centre piece, and all most beautifully coloured.

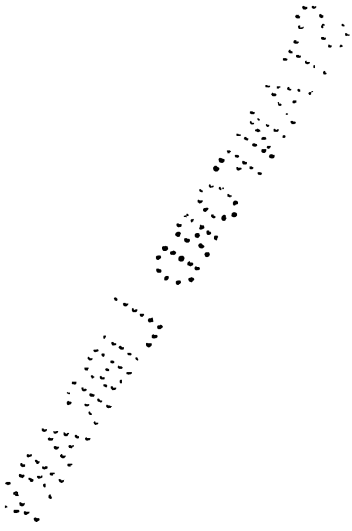
At Kioto also are to be seen some of the finest embroideries in Japan, embroideries so soft in colour, the patterns so fantastic and weird in form, but still each one artistic; it is seldom that the most critical



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9. TEMPLE OF YAKUSHI.





can find fault with either the colouring or the design. *Kimonos* are made for the European market, but even in these they have not lost that taste of colour which is so characteristic of the country; in this one branch of their manufactures they have not deteriorated to such an extent to please the—may I call it—bad taste of the western countries. The Americans, I believe, are chiefly responsible for the decline of Japanese art. They require—and unless they obtain it, will not buy these tawdry articles—a brilliant clash of colouring; the more *auffallend*—conspicuous hardly describes it—the colours, the better they are pleased. So far even has their art degraded in the past few years that one is shown an article, palpably, from the very inconsistency of its colouring, a modern piece of manufacture, and told it is hundreds of years old; they will even go so far as to guarantee its age and antiquity by offering written proof showing the temple or noble's house from which it has been unearthed.

Another great industry worth mentioning is the *cloisonné*, of which Kioto is again the home. It is very much older than the *Satsuma* work, though, until last century, was never carried to any great pitch of perfection. It has, through the patience and energy of the people, been brought to an absolute art. It is a

kind of mosaic, but instead of differently coloured stones being inlaid to form a pattern or design, the metal it is desired to treat receives first a network of wires soldered on to the solid frame, and then these cells are filled up with enamel paste and permitted to dry by being baked several times. When the baking operations are complete, it is rubbed down several times until the whole is a polished surface. The colours are at times so carefully chosen that they seem to run into one another, the wires disappear, and the whole looks like one piece of colouring.

What to my mind is the finest of all arts, I have left till the last. It is better carried out in Japan than in any other country, namely, the gold and cherry lacquer work. No other country can compete with them in this branch of industry. The dampness of the atmosphere is essential to it, and that they have, and so have we, but what we have not, and probably never will have, is sufficient patience. Time with us is too valuable, and the article becomes too expensive for trade purposes.

The article is lacquered over time after time, sometimes twenty times or more, but owing to labour being so cheap in Japan the finished piece of work can be put on the market four times as cheap as if it had been

done in Europe, and, I am bound to say, four times as well done. A native who does this lacquer work—nearly always a skilled workman, and certainly an artist in the truest sense of the word—gets paid at the rate of from 6d. to 1s. a day, whilst in this country he would get anything from 40s. to 50s. a week. This is the main reason why works of art cannot be manufactured here. The demand is so great and labour so dear that machinery must be used to do the work that human hands, with brains and artistic minds behind them, accomplish in Japan. Does it not stand to reason that an artist must be able to manufacture something more graceful, more natural, and beautiful than a machine can, no matter how wonderfully constructed that machine is or what amount of mechanism it displays? A machine accomplishes the same work, theoretically, as a modern workman, and turns it out probably neater, certainly more exact and symmetrical, and without a doubt much cheaper, but then I contend that few workmen have any soul in what they are doing. Take the ordinary routine of a cabinetmaker's workshop. The hands come probably at eight, and are obliged to register the time of their arrival. That in itself must destroy any particle of love they may have for their work. Each man is

given a certain portion of some larger work to plane or cut, all, of course, according to measurements; he probably does not even know for what he is making it, whether for a chair or table. Where then can his interest come in? Ask any of these men whether they like the work, and the answer is always the same: "It's as good as anything else." What is the result bound to be? That several dozens of chairs or tables —they may all be artistic—are manufactured, placed on the market, and sold at an enormous profit; there has only been one mind at work, one brain, one artist —the designer. To him all the credit is due, though he gets very little of it. The man who gets credit and profit is the financier, though he may not know the difference between pine and mahogany. This Crœsus gets everything, and people come to his store because he has an underpaid designer who is the artist, and overpaid fools of workmen whose only idea in life is to get their work done as quickly as possible and go, never to think of it again until necessity forces them to do so next morning. The workmen are not to be blamed individually or as a class, for the lack of interest they take in their work: the financier cannot be blamed for his endeavour to make as much money as possible, and pay wages according to prices fixed by

trades unions. It is the system alone that is at fault in this particular instance of cabinet manufacture, the system of giving each man, perhaps for weeks or months, only one portion of an article to manufacture. That must kill any artistic feeling he may have had, because, being possibly a lover of art, his hands are not allowed to accomplish what his brain fashions. It is the same throughout nature; stifle a feeling, crush with slavery the imaginations of a brain, and you destroy the soul.

"There is in every human breast
A feeling bordering on unrest,
On incompleteness:
Yearnings that cannot be defined,
Yet live to rob each mortal mind
Of half its sweetness."

In every human heart there must be some feeling of incompleteness, some yearning no matter what, a hope, a craving, and if that feeling is not given breath to live, if it is hampered and forced to lie dormant, it becomes by slow degrees a nonentity. But give that feeling scope to grow, feed it, encourage it, and it is bound to blossom forth and bear fruit.

Look at the hundreds of hard-working, poverty-stricken artists who, provided they could get that

encouragement, would give out to the world in many cases work worthy of the name of art. Their ideas are cramped, hemmed in on all sides, probably because they are poor, and so unable to snap their fingers at the wholesale buyers, whose demand is for the mass and not for the lovers of art. Let each man work out his own ideas however crude at first. If in the end he is successful he is satisfied, the yearnings of his heart are stilled, the empty spot in his life is filled. Only the most persevering can survive the many years of discouragement. To every man is given a particular talent. In some it is more easily developed than in others. It is sometimes called a hobby, and only by indulging that hobby can a satisfactory end be attained.

Glance for a moment at Japan, and see how different their methods are. Go into a shop where articles of furniture are made, or where wood is carved; each man sits before his panel of wood on which, perhaps, a design is already drawn: in many cases he is even allowed to do that himself, his own imagination is permitted to do what with us only a paid designer is thought capable of doing. What is the result? No imitation; each piece of work different because no two minds are alike. In every piece of work one can trace originality, and only



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10. AN UMBRELLA MAKER.



because each man is allowed to do that which his soul yearns to do. That is one reason why the man of poorest and humblest parentage can in Japan rise to something higher than the mere labourer or workman. Each man works to attain an end, the highest end it is given a man to aspire to, what his soul asks for—the indulgence of the soul's craving.

A man's heart will soon become bitter if it is trampled on; but give it breath and freedom to work its own way, and that man is worthy of envy, his life is happy, his thoughts have no chance of becoming degraded, his soul is in his work, he lives. And so all the workmen of Japan, even if born in the lowest station of life, are given a chance, if they wish to avail themselves of it.

I have attempted in this chapter to give you an idea of the art of Japan. Though when one comes to analyse the word, or attempts to define it, it appears deficient, and, by itself, does not express to the mind all the soul feels. Art, as I have attempted to depict it, is the expression of the soul—those sentiments of taste which, through the medium of colour, form, rhythm, and the beauties of nature, appeal to the mind, and assist in filling a void in the life of a man of artistic temperament. Art in its more

extended meaning may embrace almost anything, but I have merely attempted to bring it within the narrower scope of its meaning.

Every man may have different ideas of art itself, and what is artistic, and therefore it must be left to his own discretion to apply the term to suit his own taste, but still, whatever meaning he may attribute to the word, or however he may wish to define it, he will probably find that it is something that appeals in varying degrees to that portion of his mind from which artistic feelings emanate, the answer from his soul that a certain craving of his heart is satisfied.

CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR HOMES

In no country in the world do a people or a country appeal to one's feelings as they do in the land of the "Rising Sun"—Dai Nippon, as it is called in their own language. Go anywhere in that country; see everything; study the people, their habits, customs, and modes of living; try and find fault with either the one or the other; go there even with a prejudiced mind, one that is resolved to find fault, and that resolution will be upset; the prejudice against both will be altered. Such is Japan—a land not only of flowers, scenery, and gardens which in their beauty surpass the imagination of man, but a land also of people with whom few can cope, no matter in what.

The people from their birth are taught certain things which will be of use to them later. If a father is a farmer or artisan his children are taught to follow in his footsteps, so that when they have reached a

certain age they can help him. Whatever industry or manufacture a man has embraced, to that work also is his son brought up, and so he learns it with a thoroughness one misses in other nations. A girl, on the other hand, is taught to take care of her younger brothers and sisters, to mind the house, or assist in watering or manuring the fields. She learns that so long as she remains young it is her duty towards herself and society to look beautiful, to dress in costumes which are becoming, to wear her hair neatly rolled. She is the person to fascinate the guests, whether by her politeness or by her looks. She must in herself be a picture; her dress must be of such a colour as not to clash with her surroundings, and her talk of such a kind as to interest her hearers.

In the Japanese dress there are few fashions: one year the *obi* may be worn broader, or tied in a bigger bow, but the cut of the *kimono* is always the same. Possibly, too, one year might see the dresses slightly longer than the last, or find the *geta*, or wooden clogs, rather higher than usual. The benefits derived from this lack of change in the fashions of their dress are numerous. The silk is usually so heavy, and of such good quality, that it will last for years, and will probably be handed down from one genera-

tion to another, so that, with a few slight alterations, it can be made to fit almost any one. The Japanese do not, consequently, consider it extravagant to pay sometimes exorbitant sums for their *kimonos*, because the economy is obvious when the same dress can be worn year after year.

Though fashions do not change, the dresses of people holding different social positions may do so. It may be customary for a lady in society to wear one gold lacquer comb in her hair and three large pins, and to have her *obi* tied at the back. On the other hand, the lady who lives in the Yoshiwara at Tokyo, or at other similar institutions throughout the land, has her sash tied in front and her hair one mass of pins. Beware, reader, that in your innocence you do not copy the head-dress or *kimono* from photos you may see in albums or on fans or screens, because they nearly always represent the costumes of those frail creatures of easy virtue!

The social position which a Japanese woman held in time past was very small. She was looked upon as a nonentity in the house, was scarcely even permitted to express an opinion; dominated by a tyrant of a mother-in-law, who would beat her if she thought her son was not receiving sufficient attention and care;

completely under the control of a husband she was perhaps forced to marry against her will, who could divorce her for the most trivial offence, and against whom she could get little satisfaction, is it any wonder that she used so often to have recourse to suicide? Anything seemed to her preferable to that life of slavery, and to being the mere tool of her husband. Gradually and by very slow stages civilisation has taught women the power of resisting the humiliation to which they were formerly subjected, so that now their position—though by no means an enviable one—has very much improved. At times in the leading society of Tokyo they dine with their husbands when a dinner party is given. Think of the treat! Formerly such a thing would have been considered impossible. The greatest honour which could have been bestowed on them before would have been a permission to appear after dinner, like a child who is allowed to come in with the dessert.

The same rules that apply to children in Europe applied to women in Japan; they should be seen and not heard; beyond the mere fact that they might brighten a room with their "presence" they were hardly deemed worthy of notice. In proof of this assertion the married women until a few years ago used to blacken



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11. A JAPANESE HOUSE.

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Approved for Release: 2019/12/13 C05102975

their teeth with enamel so as to look ugly in the eyes of all but their husbands, who were supposed to have the image of their former charms still engraved in their memories. The custom became out of fashion when the present Empress ceased to disfigure herself in that way, and now only a few women in the smaller places inland continue to do so.

The position which a Japanese woman holds in a family is very different to that held by women in European countries. The relative worth of man and woman has never amongst Occidentals been so far apart as in the East. It is certain that the modern woman of Europe is becoming every year more emancipated. She is imitating, and with success too, the male sex, donning to a great extent his dress, showing him that she is no longer going to be tyrannised over as in former years. In France a wife helps her husband in his business, in England she seeks work of her own, and in Germany she still remains the good *Hausfrau* whose sole care is to look after the children, make good *Küchenzettel*, and "feed the brute," who so long as he gets a hearty meal and plenty of beer is contented!

What the Japanese woman is taught and learns to perfection is obedience to her parents or her brothers —if they stand in the position of head of the family—

until she marries. With marriage everything is changed. She leaves her home absolutely, and becomes a member of her husband's family. Her parents no longer have any authority over her; she owes them no obedience or even filial affection, but, instead, she owes it to her parents-in-law. In place, therefore, of a son having to do battle with, and (possibly) succumb to the tyranny of a mother-in-law, his wife is subservient to those members of her husband's family under whose authority it is her misfortune to fall.

The marriage is arranged, not by the people who are to live together in matrimony, nor yet, as a rule, by their respective parents, but by the semi-official "middleman," who is called the *nakōdo*. He is a friend of both parties, and negotiates for their mutual advantage. It is his task to introduce the young couple, and by his decision they are forced to abide, provided the parents on both sides consider his ruling beneficial to the contracting parties. This "love match" is then what the Germans would term *eine gute Partie*—we have no adequate rendering, I am glad to say—one that is beneficial, not necessarily to the lovers, but to the family from which they come—a rich girl, perhaps, with a titled man, the

equivalent of the English lord and the almighty dollar.

If a father is too indulgent to a girl during her childhood, she must necessarily suffer when she marries, and is forced by the law of the country to obey her husband. The husband rules the wife even as the father rules the family. According to the old rules of divorce, it is as easy to divorce your wife as to marry her. If she fails to cook the food well, to mind the children, or see that her husband is well cared for, he can, without the slightest trouble, divorce her when he gets tired of her. The converse does not hold good; she cannot divorce him on the same grounds. Among the better classes he does not do so, because society does not forbid him to have as many mistresses as he likes. Though the law has attempted to do away with concubinage, he can put his legal wife on the shelf and take another. The main object of concubinage, which was legal up to within a few years ago, was the desire of every father to have a son who could carry on the family name. He might not care to divorce his wife on the ground of her inability to give birth to a boy, and so was permitted, often with the wife's consent, to take a No. 2, and so do away with the necessity of

adopting a male. The wife still remained his "better half," and if a son was born to him by his second wife, the child was taught to look upon the first as the mother, and the second merely as a nurse. Their motto in this respect was that "necessity is the mother of invention." Among the poorer people divorce is much more common. The wife is merely the tool of her husband, and as such is subservient to him—in fact his slave. When the husband entertains his friends the wife remains upstairs or in the kitchen, or, if she is permitted to take part at the festivity, remains in the background a sort of ornament, but one ready to spring into activity when her lord and master desires it, and to entertain her husband's guests with her conversation.

It is interesting to read what Will Adams, the first Englishman to land in Japan, wrote in one of his letters about the people. These are his own words, written about 1612 to a friend in England: "The people of this Iland of Iapon are good of nature, curteous above measure, and valiant in warre: their iustice is seuerely executed without any partialitie vpon transgressors of the law. They are gouerned in great ciuilitie, I meane not a land better gouerned in the world by ciuill policie. The

people be verie superstitious in their religion, and are of diuers opinions. There be many Jesuites and Franciscan friars in this land, and they haue conuerted many to be Christians and haue many churches in the Iland." The writer seems to have summed up the qualities of the Japanese admirably in those few words "good of nature, courteous above measure, and valiant in war."

One more word before I pass from woman to the man to whom she is subordinate, and that is to mention the *shinju*, the natural consequence of a *mariage de convenance*. *Shinju* is the name given to a dual suicide of persons of opposite sex. A boy and a girl—for they are seldom more than sixteen or eighteen — who are not permitted to marry because the meddlesome *nakōdo* fixes it otherwise, end their lives in one last embrace, either by taking poison, or by the man stabbing the girl he loves and then himself. In that way deprived of the happiness of matrimony, they seek relief in death.

Women being subservient to men, more can be written about the latter; they have also undergone more changes than their more interesting fellow-beings. Let me begin at the bottom by

mentioning the street-sweepers — not as we understand them, armed with brooms, hose, or "dust" pans, but shouldering a bamboo stick with a sharp point. This road-sweeper superseded the *eta*, a man who was considered too vile to be reckoned worthy even of notice in the census. The *eta* were grave-diggers, scavengers, loiterers, the scum of the earth, hardly deserving the name of man; loathed by their fellow-creatures as beneath contempt, touchers of dead bodies, and persons who had no rights at all. The official street-sweeper of to-day—though still the lowest of the low—is treated as a living creature, and is honoured by being included as a "man" in the census. We should consider him rather a boon in a city like London; but then, opinions differ. His vocation is to wander round the towns collecting the paper that is lying about, emptying the dust-boxes which are placed outside of the houses every morning, and generally cleaning the streets. He is undertaker and grave-digger in one; but now he may by hard work aspire to something higher, and has an equal chance with the rest of mankind of rising to a position in the social world of Japan.

The various grades amongst the Japanese are so



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12. MAN LABOUR.



numerous that it is impossible to give many of them in detail, and so I have thought it best to divide them into the lower classes and the *shizoku*, or civilian—a term given to a man we should call a gentleman. The *shizoku* include all, from the middle upper class to the *samurai* and *daimyos* of former times. The *daimyos* were the old feudal lords, and not by any means the only aristocracy in Japan. Apart from them the emperor had his own followers, members of the royal house. Originally these *daimyos* were soldiers, and held most of the land in the country. They were extremely proud of the position they held, carried two swords, and walked something like a German infantry soldier. Gradually they became extinct, and gave place to the *samurai*, who were also military men and the squires of Japan. From the *samurai* the *shizoku* took their rise, and now all the better class men are reckoned under that denomination.

The characteristics of the Japanese are their absolutely black, straight hair—seldom is it possible to see one with fair or curly locks, though *saké* soakers are said to have red hair—their eyes, which are slightly oblique, as is the case with most of the Mongolian races, and their bodies long in comparison

with their legs. The reason of this is probably due to the fact that they always squat on their heels, and never sit on a chair. Amongst men who live an outdoor life—farmers, coolies, and labourers—this deformity is not so noticeable, because their legs are given more chance of growing. In stature the men are seldom much over 5 feet 4 inches—about the height of the average European women—and the women in comparison mere dolls.

The costume worn by the *shizoku* is extremely plain and neat, and varies only from the *kimonos* of the women in the differences of colour and cut. The chief article of dress is the *kimono*, which for a man is made of striped grey silk, and for a woman of any colour that may take her fancy. It is fastened from left to right, and held in place by a girdle, the *obi*. Below this is an under-dress also the shape of a *kimono*, but shorter, and usually of white silk, showing an edge about half-an-inch broad at the neck and breast. Over all, when they walk out, comes a kind of Inverness cape, called the *haori*, made mostly of black or grey silk, and on which the crest of the wearer is worked in white silk; this is fastened loosely in front with white silk cords tied in a sailor's knot. Their feet are clad in thick socks, called *tabi*, with a separate

place for the big toe, reaching only just above the ankles. When in their houses they seldom wear shoes, but if they do, they use *zori*, straw sandals with a thong stretched from the front and attached to each side, forming the letter V; this fits in between the big toe and rest of the foot, and enables them to retain the sandals. When they go out they put on wooden clogs, with bars of wood about two inches high at the bottom, called *geta*, which keep their feet out of the mud and rain. The *shizoku* generally carry a fan, which fixes into their girdle, and is made of mulberry paper stretched tightly across narrow strips of bamboo. The Japanese are supposed to be the originators of the *ōgi*, as this folding fan is called. The old legend is, that a priestess cured a sufferer from fever in a temple by fanning him, and she is supposed to have been the inventor. Besides the fan they carry a *nécessaire*, called *netsuke*, in which they keep all the paraphernalia necessary for a smoker, as pipe, tobacco, matches, and cigarettes. We have not yet finished with everything appertaining to the dress, though this last has almost gone out of fashion—the *in-ro*, or medicine-chest, made of gold lacquer or carved red lacquer wood. It consists of numerous small compartments joined by a cord which

passes through each, and holds court-plaster (or its equivalent), smelling-salts, and the gentleman's seal.

The men carry small sticks when the weather is fine, and umbrellas (almost the most picturesque thing in Japan) when it is wet. Unlike Mrs. Gamp's, or the more elegant article manufactured in St. James's Street, the Japanese umbrella is made of oiled paper, thick and yellow, and so large as almost to hide the person of the man who uses it. It is fascinating beyond description to see perhaps two little maids clad in bright-coloured silk toddling along on their wooden *geta* under one of these yellow umbrellas; or to see, on a warm summer's day, O Ainosuki San in her light-coloured *kimono*, smiling or giggling with her companion, O Kiku San, under paper sunshades, the delight of the English fireplace! Why is it that people in Europe delight in misusing things? They plaster Japanese fans all over their walls, fill their fireplaces with sunshades designed for another purpose, use *saké* cups for ash-trays, crowd their walls with swords, daggers, or assegais, and then consider their rooms artistic. Not even content with misusing another nation's goods, and feeling ashamed of their profanity, the Europeans delight in it, and show off Japanese collections to natives with a feeling of pride

at their artistic skill in using them for what they were never intended. It is lucky that Japan is so far off, and that the greater bulk of the people cannot see the ignominy to which their wares are subjected.

From the foregoing description it may be thought that everything is perfect there, and that Japan does not bear a share of the world's crimes, but that is not so. There are robbers in Japan as in Europe, murderers, blackguards, liars, filchers, every corrupt man it is possible to name, except swearers; that they leave to the Chinese, not from any idea that it is wrong, but because their language does not possess any swear-words. Unhappy land that cannot give vent to its feelings; but yet its people seem to have picked up sufficient English to make up for any deficiency in that respect they may have ever felt. Now they can curse as lustily as any navvy, and in his language too.

The Japanese are ready to imitate us in anything they consider advantageous to themselves. Ill-content with their own artistic costume, the women take to skirts, blouses, and, worst of all, to that inexpressible garment which keeps the bodice in shape and makes the figure unnatural! The men prefer trousers and coat to a loose *kimono*, and, since civilisation has visited them, cover their heads with all manner of European

hats, from a peak cap to a "Homburg hat." If they contented themselves with wearing hats only when dressed in trousers and coat, it would not matter, but they wear them also when clothed in a *kimono*. It is amusing to see the Japanese men in frock-coats and top hats, proudly walking along in Tokyo at garden parties, and their wives in Parisian frocks and toques. It all seems so out of place. It is, however, not fair to judge Japan by remaining in the towns. There they do ape the European as much as they can, and not only in dress and manners, but also in their houses and modes of living.

The larger towns are built in streets and rows of European houses, enormous stone and brick mansions, in the place of their diminutive *maisonettes*. Yokohama can now boast of hundreds of jerry-built houses exactly similar to our own and to one another. It seems a pity that Japan should have been visited by us, and borrowed our ideas just at a time when we were probably less artistic than we have been for some time, and when our architecture is more commonplace (I am referring to the rows of red brick houses which are built in a few weeks) than it has been for years. Whilst they were instituting new methods, it is a pity that they did not go back



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13. A VILLAGE STREET.





further for their models, and copy the architecture of the Renaissance.

Their own native buildings can hardly be called artistic as a whole. A bird's-eye view of a Japanese town is extremely ugly. There are no towers or church steeples to relieve the monotony of the flat, even appearance of all the roofs. But if the outsides are ugly, that ugliness is amply compensated for by the artistic taste displayed in the interior.

Go into a house of any size in Japan, go in the evening after the inhabitants have returned home from the labours of the day. Enter one of those houses and see the life there; no matter how poor the people are or how old and infirm, the picture is nearly always the same. You enter a room perhaps only a few feet across, but covered with mats rather over two inches thick, all of the same size and scrupulously clean. In the centre of the room stands the *hibachi*, a jar resembling a flower-pot made of metal and filled with red-hot charcoal. Stuck into the burning embers are several metal chopsticks, with which they poke the fire or use for lifting out pieces of charcoal to light their pipes. Around this fireplace the whole family sit, the men smoking their peculiar small pipes, which only hold enough

tobacco for about two whiffs, or inhaling their cigarettes, the women following their example or embroidering. In one corner a member of the family may be finishing some part of his daily work; in another the youngest member of the house is asleep in its *kimono* of thickly quilted fabric, unconscious of the sounds of voices and merry laughter from the other inmates of the room. Is not that room a paradise to what you are accustomed to amongst people of the same standing in your own countries. Take note how hard it is to find anything in that room to offend the eye. There is no furniture to fill the room with its ugly bulkiness, no cane-bottomed or bottomless chairs to trip over, no pictures in gilded frames to attract your attention. There is nothing but these few people squatting on their heels around the fire, and one—seldom more—*kakemono*, hung artistically on the wall, and possibly a vase of some blossom that may happen to be in flower. These people, though they are ill-fed, hard worked, and poor even beyond our conception of poverty (the whole family has about 6d. a day to live on), are happy. There is no discontented look on their faces, or noisy brawling and drunken oaths. They live in peace.

In the interior of Japan, of course, everything is

extremely primitive still. The tea-houses, *chaya* as they are called, boast neither table nor chair as a rule, but when a stranger comes they are procured if wanted from the neighbouring police-station—the regular plain unpolished deal table and cane chairs. The floors are much more comfortable, and it requires but little practice to become efficient in the art of sitting on one's heels or tailor fashion.

The delight of living in a tea-house may not from the foregoing and subsequent description appeal to a Westerner who has never been to Japan; but take it from me it is absolutely fascinating, and the more one sees of them and the less one comes in contact with European hotels there the better one is pleased. Everybody after a hard day's walk must know how pleasant it is to receive the attention of one of the fair sex, and so the first person to meet you on arrival at one of these *chaya* is a little *mousmé*, the daintiest little person you can imagine. She is dressed with scrupulous neatness, her *kimono* gathered up just over her feet to facilitate her walking about, and kept in place by the large *obi*—which in the female attire is much broader than in the men's—tied at the back and forming a large bow (the Japanese bustle); her hair jet black and neatly arranged with combs and

pins—the use of small fans in the hair is a European invention—her feet destitute of shoes. This little woman is your servant, the person who shows you to your room after she has removed your boots: to profane a Japanese dwelling by entering with boots or shoes on would be as great an insult to the host as it would be to enter the drawing-room of some society lady's house in London and walk upon her sofa or chairs. One is shown into a room perfect in every way. In the middle stands a small cherry lacquered table a few inches in height, and after O Umo San (Miss Plum) has bidden her guest be seated—on the floor—she rushes out to make the tea (*cha*), which is served in small dainty cups, without handles, of the finest egg-shell china; with this she returns, the whole neatly arranged on a tray with cakes and sweetmeats of various descriptions, and having deposited her tray, she retires with a polite bow.

Look round that room and try and find fault with either the room as a whole or with any individual thing; it is impossible, because that room is artistically empty—if such a term can be applied to emptiness. There is nothing to offend the most critical; nothing to be seen in fact, except the usual *kakemono*

hanging from the paper wall, one bronze pot of blossoms arranged only as the Japanese know how, and, if the weather is cold, one or two *hibachi* to warm your hands. Beyond those few things the room is empty, and in that emptiness lies the whole charm of a Japanese dwelling. Slide back the partition which divides your room from the neighbouring one and you will see the same neatness, the same cleanliness and white mats, the only difference being another *kakemono* and, according to its colour, other flowers.

Bedtime at 9 P.M., or even earlier, seems to one rather ludicrous; but yet that is their custom, and by that one must abide. Considering that the august stranger is only permitted one room in which to eat, drink, rest, joke, and sleep, this custom may not seem so out of place; because if the *mousmé* has many sitting-rooms to transform into bedrooms it may take time to effect that change. "*Futon motte koi*," you call out if you are anxious to go to bed, and the little servant will toddle into the room laden with quilts so that her small body is absolutely hidden from sight. The thickest quilt is laid on the floor, another placed on top of it, and a thinner one rolled to form a pillow, which is placed at the head of the



quilts. The Japanese, instead of using a pillow, substitute a wooden block, not unlike one of the ancient blocks used for beheading people, hollowed out slightly in the centre to fit the nape of the neck, and covered over with felt. This pillow is called *makūra*, and he who can avoid using it had better do so; it is not intended for an Occidental's neck, but is extremely useful to the women of Japan, who only take their hair down about every three weeks. The only other thing required is the top covering for the bed, which is sheet, blanket, and eider-down all in one. This is called the *yagu*, or top quilt, and is in the shape of a *kimono* of thickly padded silk. The *mousmé*, or *ne-san*, having assisted her guest to undress, and tucked him up with the tender care of an old nurse, retires with her good wishes for a pleasant night, "*O Yasumi nasai.*" Here the troubles begin. You find, or perhaps only imagine, the quilts may not be quite clean; you fancy some friend has told you others have slept in them without their undergoing a cleaning; you already conjure up the unpleasant idea of worrying insects, and so, for fear of any annoying sensations, you rise again and put on more of your own clothes and fewer of those the *chaya* provided. At last slumber seems near, and

you look forward to a good night's sleep. But no, my friends, though you may be dozing, sleep is yet a thing of the future. A man suddenly appears at your door, salaaming on the floor, and muttering something about a shampoo and head massage. Fancy a vigorous shampoo just when sleep seems nearest. Under a volley of imprecations the *amma-san*, as he is called, at length retires, and you hope at last for rest, but you are not destined to get it. At about 9.30 or 10 the boy disturbs you by fixing the shutters in front of your window, and so depriving you of air and light. With another "*O Yasumi nasai*" he, too, retires, and the house is quiet. Your dreams I cannot describe, and my own are too pleasant a reminiscence to allow of their being told. When, however, you imagine yourself surrounded by little Japanese ladies and fancy you hear their gay prattle and merry, musical voices—purely imagination of course—you are awakened by the most deafening noise imaginable, and at about 4 A.M. too! Alarm clocks are sweet music to the sounds that reach the sleeper's ears; knocking and "Hot water, sir," is superfluous in this land of tranquillity. I defy even Morpheus to sleep through that noise, and you discover it to be the Boy —spelt with a big B—removing the wooden shutters

and sliding them back into the walls. That's all, but it is a terribly sudden awakening whilst it lasts. After that sleep is impossible; busy feet make unearthly sounds around you, hurrying backwards and forwards on the wooden boards, and so you consider it best to get up and have your nap in the daytime instead. It is quite unnecessary to inform the *ne-san* to "*Kara hay aku okoshiti kudasai*"—to wake you early; they do it in a most unmannerly fashion, unbidden.

There are, of course, tea-houses and tea-houses. The first we will call *chaya*, which are admirably conducted—except for the few inconveniences I have enumerated—and the second we will not mention because they are not proper and have no descriptive name. When you leave a tea-house you are as much pestered with politeness and pretty speeches as when you arrive, but for a different reason. When you arrive it is to show you hospitality, and when you depart to make you more generous with the *cha* (literally tea) money, the Egyptian *bakshish* every one knows about to his annoyance. Your host will present you with a letter of introduction, called *annai-jo*, from himself to the owner of the next inn you wish to stay at, recommending you to the other's good

care; and so, with many bows, they wish you a "*mata irashai*"—a speedy return—or "*sayōnara*"—good-bye—according as you have behaved.

It is hard to attempt a comparison between Japanese and European life. Everything, even the very thoughts of the people, works on different lines. They do everything exactly opposite to the way we do them. They build the roofs of their houses first on a plain structure, and then fill in the spaces afterwards. They read from right to left, starting at what we would call the end of the book; they write, also, from right to left. To watch them making out an account is in itself a study; first the figures, then the words, and if you imagine the sum-total will be in a certain place on the paper, look at exactly the opposite end, because it is certain to be there. Their eyes turn up at the corners instead of being straight or turning down. They hang up their boots in the hall instead of their hats, rub their legs instead of shaking hands, and not as in China, where you shake your own hands instead of your friends' if you want to say good-day. They have dessert and liqueurs before the more staple dishes of fish and rice. Men are courted by their wives and obeyed by them, not *vice versâ*. Japan is, in fact, a land of contradictions.



CHAPTER IV

BATHING, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC

If you reach a tea-house after a long day's walk the inhabitants seem to realise that their guest must be tired. At any rate, whether you are or not, certain formulæ must be gone through unless you are sufficiently fluent in the language to resist the pressure which is brought to bear on you.

The landlord and his family seem to be here, there, and everywhere at once—they run about, shout to each other, and whilst the boy is removing your dusty boots, the others are preparing the room for the honoured stranger. It is almost considered an insult to them to remove your own boots. Shoes are at once forthcoming and placed on your feet, or, if one prefers *tabi*—a kind of mitten for the feet, reaching only as far as the ankle—instead of felt slippers, they are there for the mere asking. The *tabi* are extremely useful, because their sandals, which are called *zori*, have a strap fixed from the



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14. O HAYO.



front to the sides into which the toe fits, and keep the feet warm.

This ceremony over, you are shown the visitors' room—probably the largest in the house—because the Japanese seem to think every European must be fabulously wealthy, merely because he has more money to spend, or rather spends more money than the average native.

There is never any pause or waiting; one is simply inundated with politeness. Tea is at once served on a nice lacquered tray, cakes are brought without the necessity of asking for them. The *ne-san* fetches a clean linen *kimono* for each of her guests, and insists on his removing his jacket and donning the native dress.

At last the partition is closed, and a few solitary moments of rest seem near. The moments reach about five minutes, just long enough to permit one to arrange one's thoughts and think of tea, when the *ne-san* again stands bowing at the door, only to say that "the contemptible bath is ready and waiting for the august stranger to condescend to place himself in the water." You are conducted out into the garden with much ceremony, and shown a wooden tub about 3 feet 6 inches high and about 2 feet 6 inches wide. A

closer inspection reveals a small stove at the back, heated with charcoal, and partly built into the bath. You look round and find yourself alone again. The water seems a delightful temperature, and alongside the tub stands a pump with cold spring water, and next to that a small basin with soap and a large wooden ladle. All this appears most enchanting, not to say romantic. A garden beautifully laid out with shrubs, hills, and flowers, a blue sky overhead with birds singing, a wooden tub with water of a temperature after your own heart, soap and all the accessories of the toilet, and a cold pump for the shower. You already think what a splendid time you are going to enjoy—you think what other nation in the world would afford one such a luxury—when you discover the absence of a towel. The first thing that suggests itself is that the *ne-san* has forgotten it in her haste. You clap your hands to summon the servant and inform her of the necessity of a bath sheet, and with many apologies she brings a small square foot of fine cambric, so fine that it is transparent, wrapped round with a band of paper to prove its being clean. No matter how tall you are, or what your circumference may be, one square foot of linen is all they can muster.

You then proceed to divest yourself of clothing, and after using the soap and ladling it off with the wooden ladle, enter the tub. But, strange! the water appears hotter now than it did before. Lean back, look at the sky; you feel lifted to the seventh heaven of bliss. Was there ever such a wonderful country? You sing—it's about the only thing left to do—when suddenly your eyes become riveted on human beings strolling about the garden. Blushes begin to spring into existence, especially as the people come closer, and you notice persons of a different sex to yourself amongst the number. The water gets hotter, and you realise that the stove is still burning and you see no chance of extinguishing it. The blushes descend from the face downwards, partly owing to the increasing temperature of the water, which must be getting to some prodigious height, and partly due to your sense of modesty. You think of your home; imagine your mother's shocked face and your male friends' amusement. You inwardly curse Japan and her people for their lack of decency, but they appear quite unabashed; they hardly notice you, and then you soliloquise, conjure up vain hopes that they cannot remain much longer, that they do not really realise the situation you are in, and that as soon

as they properly see your head, their finer feelings will return, and with their return, they will depart with many apologies.

Instead of the seventh heaven of bliss you feel nearer Hades. The water gets still hotter, you feel yourself inwardly swelling; your skin, which a few moments ago was really only warm, now feels scorched, and still the spectators linger on.

Ultimately, no longer able to bear the torture, with a savage yell you jump out and rush for the pump. Blushes, modesty, thoughts of home, all disappear; you force yourself to believe you have become callous of the gaze of spectators who, through your yells, have been forced to look round, and stand there scrutinising you under the pump, not knowing whether you are in pain and require help, or whether your terrible sounds are a European's usual expressions after the joys of a garden bath.

Your cry of mingled agony and rage has had one effect, however, because you see the *ne-san* running across the garden with another square foot of towel, with which she proceeds to rub and scrub your back, almost removing what small amount of flesh still adheres to the bones after boiling. No imprecations have the slightest effect; she does not

understand them, and in her zeal to do the right thing and please the honoured sir, she interprets your threats wrongly, and rubs all the harder.

Whether the Japanese mind works on the same lines that dominate an artist's—that everything in nature is beautiful — or whether it fails to see anything immodest in watching a man perform his ablutions, I never discovered. The terrible fact remains that these people do walk about the garden, they do wish you to avail yourself of their services and appear hugely interested. Amusement does not seem to enter their heads. I suppose their theory is that to the pure everything is pure; an unsullied mind covers a multitude of sins.

After the dressing is complete, and your senses (after the severe strain) have become pacified, you feel that the remaining spark of modesty has flickered out; but after a few lessons the operation of bathing, dressing, and being scraped down is performed in future without a blush, and taken quite as a matter of course.

I do not wish to suggest that this prehistoric performance takes place everywhere in Japan—far from it. Only in the smallest inland places, far away from the throng of civilised persons, and where

the missionaries have not yet had time to degrade the people's minds by teaching them the difference between morality and immorality, can this luxury —if so it can be termed—be indulged in. In many places up-country the baths are even in the open street, and continue there until police supervision —another introduction of civilisation—puts a stop to them.

Over most parts of the country there are hot water springs, always at the same temperature, and, in many cases, sulphur springs also. The volcanic nature of the country is responsible for these. At Atami, a few miles from Miyanoshita, in the Hakone district, can be seen a geyser almost as fine as any in New Zealand. Water spouts out of the earth at times to a height of thirty or forty feet; whilst at Miyanoshita itself the country round is extraordinary. One sees in the distance clouds of steam rising from the ground, and as one approaches a strong smell of sulphur is perceptible. The whole ground appears rotten with the outer coating hard, as if a crust had formed, and the rocks and crevices in the earth at times emit volumes of smoke. Apparently it is entirely due to the volcanic nature of the place that these thermal baths exist.

At Kawara-yu, a small spot close to Ikao, these sulphur baths are almost world-renowned. They are supposed to practically cure any disease. Hundreds of people visit Kawara-yu every summer—when the weather there is warm — and indulge in these sulphurous baths. Up to a few years ago the men's and women's baths were one and the same. They became a sort of Hyde Park in the season; every one used to turn out and bathe there together—men, women, and children — quite irrespective of sex. The scandal of the day would be discussed, and all the various topics of the season enumerated at length. No one ever dreamt of any harm. A European bathing amongst them, though treated with respect and politeness, would be the centre of an admiring crowd, especially if he happened to have fair hair and was tall. Anything out of the ordinary amuses the Japanese, and the fact of being possessed of blue eyes and fair hair is quite sufficient to make the fellow-bathers stare and even giggle. It is not a pleasant sensation to be giggled at—even by a Japanese.

In winter, when the place is too cold for many visitors to stop there, the natives seem to have a jovial time, according to their own account. They

think nothing of remaining in the bath for a month on end and sleep, eat, and drink in the water. It is the only way they can keep warm, at a height of 4000 feet above sea-level, and living as they do in primitive houses with wooden partitions and paper windows. The children sit in the bath whenever they feel cold, and one old man of about seventy is (according to hearsay) supposed to remain in his watery home the whole winter.

At Yumoto, in the Nikkō district, also several thousand feet high, the bathing is much the same, though hardly any people remain there during the winter months. They leave at the end of October and return towards the middle of April. Yumoto has of late years become so "respectable" that wooden partitions have been placed round the baths, dividing them, so that the modesty of Europeans is no longer shocked; but the Japanese, in their delightful innocence, forgot to build the partition to the bottom of the water, and consequently, a good under-water swimmer may get somewhat mixed, and find himself suddenly emerging on the ladies' side, and as few wear anything but the garments Dame Nature furnished them with at their birth, the result of this sudden apparition may appear



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15. SEA BATHING.



detrimental to the nerves of any European who may be enjoying the warmth of the water.

The Japanese become so used to bathing in water over blood heat, that they can with comfort remain a long time in a temperature varying from anything between 100° and 120° Fahrenheit. Mr. Basil Chamberlain, whose word on anything Japanese can generally be taken as authentic, declares that in summer the people at these bathing places apologise for their uncleanliness; but say that owing to pressure of business they cannot find time for more than two baths a day. In the slack season five is about the average number.

Even in hotels in larger towns inland—such as Nagoya, where I spent the night — the "tubbing" arrangements were primitive. After a good night's sleep, I was called and told the bath was prepared. Thinking that at last I could enjoy my morning tub in private, I repaired to the room, and found the usual wooden arrangement and all the accessories, except the cold pump. A few claps of the hand brought the *ne-san* toddling along, and requesting to know what was required. I called for cold water, and whilst it was being drawn, thought I might just as well sit in the bath as outside and await

its arrival. I had no sooner settled myself comfortably in the warm water, when the door flew open without a knock or even a request for permission to enter, and the *ne-san* shot the bucket of ice-cold water over my head, and then refused to go until she had dried me. Sometimes one has to use force to get rid of these people, they are so persistent in their endeavours to help.

Cleanliness is about the only thing that the Japanese have not derived from China. In that they stand out far above the race from whom all their other ideas have originated. Their religion—the Buddhist branch of it, originally Indian—found its way into China, and thence *viâ* Korea to Japan. So also their art, houses, mode of living, and dressing.

Though the Japanese may seldom, amongst the poorer classes, change their *kimonos*, which, to outward appearances, look extremely dirty and dusty, these inside are probably clean, because their bodies are so. Be that as it may, the fact remains that a crowd in Japan is sweet smelling in comparison to any other crowd it has ever been my misfortune to mix with.

Statistics show that in Tokyo alone there are as



many as 1200 public baths, and that over half a million inhabitants bathe there every day. Washing forms also part of the ritual of the Shinto religion, the purification of the soul by the cleansing of the body; so that, according to them, cleanliness and godliness walk hand in hand.



CHAPTER V

CHILDREN, OLD AND YOUNG

So much space has been devoted in previous chapters to the men and women of Japan, without much mention being made of their offspring, that I feel a chapter devoted to them will not be amiss, especially, as Sir Rutherford Alcock wrote, "Japan is a very paradise of babies." Always happy and bright, their very quarrels are play and tears are scarcely known. If a child falls, he gets up again, rubs the injured spot, and toddles off to join his playmates. Whether the idea of crying never strikes them, or whether they become immuned from weeping, I don't know, the extraordinary fact remains, the children, old or young, never cry.

A child when he is born is handed over to a sister to be taken care of. The mother's task is not altogether accomplished when she has given birth to her offspring. She makes its little bright-coloured *kimono*, the brighter and gayer it is the greater

chance is the child supposed to have of growing into a healthy person. She shaves its head as soon as any hair makes its appearance, leaving only a fringe round the forehead and neck and a tuft in the centre. There is no limit to the mother's imagination in this respect; she experiments on that child's head until she has discovered what she considers the most becoming *coiffeur*, the artistic skill she expends knows no bounds, nothing is too much trouble, and no task too arduous. She presents him to Hotei, the god of children, one of the seven gods of luck; his jovial, smiling face seems just what a child would require for a romp. He is the personification of happy contentment. It is an astonishing fact that the little mites do not tumble downstairs more than they do, clad as they are in long *kimonos*, and with *geta* on their feet, awkward enough to make any one trip. A possible reason is, that in many houses the temptation is removed because they have no stairs, but if they have, there are never any railings or wooden nursery gates to bar their passage. They are the quaintest little individuals imaginable. They look as wise as aged sages, round-faced, pink-cheeked, with sparkling, obliquely-set eyes and shorn heads. It is a common

sight to see girls of six or seven playing games of tick with sleeping babies on their backs, their poor little heads jerking about, so that one imagines every moment they must drop off. They appear, however, quite unconscious of shaking. Frequently it is hard to see whether it is a baby or a doll that is strapped to a girl's back—they both look alike, an impassive mass of flesh in one case, and wood in the other.

The ceremony of shaving a child's head has given rise to an unpleasant disease. In many cases their heads appear covered with sores—a form of eczema—due probably to the use of an unclean razor. Owing to a foolish superstition the parents take no steps to cure them, because they fancy the children will be healthier in later life if the illness comes out when they are young. They attribute it to naughtiness which lurks under the infantile scalp, and consider this eczema the best means of getting rid of it—an outlet for the devil.

The boys, unlike those of other countries, never exhibit the smallest amount of shyness; if they are in the company of grown-up persons, they show them all deference, and are good-mannered; if they are amongst foreigners they do not laugh, snigger, or—worst of all—stand with their hands deep in their

trousers pockets (the natural reason being that they have none). They appear interested in what is said, and if a foreigner with small knowledge of their language tries to converse with them, they attempt to help him out of his difficulties without ill-mannered mockery.

The Japanese, both old and young, are holiday lovers, and they have as many national holidays practically as weeks in the year. Every one turns out, be it wet or fine, either to wander *en famille* through their picturesque lanes, admiring the colouring, or to sit in front of a show of blossoms. They consider it almost a religious duty to make merry on these numerous occasions. Not content with one or two days in succession, when they celebrate their New Year, work ceases for quite two weeks. It heralds the time for merry-making, families call on each other, exchange presents, and eat a mess they call *zōni*, made of rice cakes and mixed with boiled beans or greens. The ladies remain at home to receive their friends, whilst the rest of the family wander all day and every day from house to house, distributing their small offerings. It is not unusual for your presents eventually to come back, because one lady may receive so many gifts of the same kind, that she sends them on to another

friend with her compliments, and so on, until the grantor becomes in turn again the grantee of his own gift. Tradesmen, instead of receiving Christmas-boxes, go their rounds amongst their customers, distributing small presents—a bribe for future patronage.

The children join in all manner of games. The whole country is topsy-turvy, and as every child is a year old on the 1st of January, quite irrespective of the month in which he or she was born, he thinks it his duty to celebrate his birthday in a befitting manner.

When they have finished their first round of calls and congratulations, it is time to start again, and so on, until the prescribed time of holiday-making is over. That, however, is only momentary, because though in 1870 the Japanese calendar was changed to conform to the European months, they fail to see why they should be done out of their real new year as opposed to the official New Year, and so, at the beginning of February the same thing starts again, and men, women, and children—they really all come under the last category—consider it their duty to celebrate the occasion as their ancestors did.

These early holidays, however, are only the



16. VISITING DAY.

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prelude to what follows later in the year, and are considered more of a religious ceremony than a relaxation. It is hard work—according to their lights—to go about incessantly from house to house, and is considered a duty rather than a form of pleasure or amusement.

It is absurd to call a person in Japan anything but a child, and any one who has seen them flying kites will agree with me that a Japanese never seems to get beyond the age of childhood. Old men of any age (the only limit is such feebleness that they cannot stand) can be seen racing about after kites. The sky is dotted with the most weird-shaped things imaginable. Birds, beasts, serpents, and scorpions, flutter about in the wind or get entangled, after which it is a case of the survival of the fittest. If two persons have a quarrel, which in Germany and France would give rise to an interchange of cards, with pistols for two and coffee for one as a consequence, in Japan they do battle with kites, an innocent form of duelling. Each combatant will have his kite with his armorial bearings, or his monogram, gorgeously painted on it in bright colours. The strings are coated over with finely powdered glass, or are made of wiry hemp, and the battle consists of trying to cut your opponent's

string, so that his kite, no longer captive, soars aloft amidst the shouts of the onlookers.

After the February New Year celebrations have drawn to a close, the country enjoys a period of hard work, and with the exception of one or two off-days, such as the anniversary of the birth of a saint or death of some illustrious being, they put their shoulders to the wheel and make up for lost time. The interval is of short duration, for on the third day of the third month the girls have their outing. Every street in every town, and each house in the street, is bedecked with dolls; big dolls and little dolls, some dressed, others stripped, round-headed, shorn-headed, pink-eyed and black-eyed, china and wooden dolls, sawdust and padded dolls, dolls of every description. The country teems with them, every girl plays with them. To be deprived of her toy would be the greatest known punishment on the 3rd of March, and if she cannot afford to buy one, she will substitute a baby brother or sister so as not to be out of the fun. The shops also sell such things as diminutive kitchen and cooking utensils, to teach the girls the way in which, in later years, they are to look after their husbands. That day is the merriest day in the year for them. They have tea-parties at which they drink a beverage

called *shiro-zake*, made from peach-blossoms soaked in water and sweetened with sugar.

The dolls represent famous people; all the members of the court are portrayed in miniature; girls search the mythology of their country for some legendary personage whose portrait they can imitate. Hundreds of Izanagies, Susa-no-o's, and celebrated Shoguns, all the Daimyos and Mikados, from Jimmu Tennō to the present Emperor, figure as dolls—a doubtful compliment to such great people.

From March the 17th till the 22nd are the festivals of Higan, when the souls of the departed are supposed to cross the Styx in search of their ultimate goal. Fancy only six days' holiday for the Big Children!

April the 3rd—after a week of work—is held as a bank-holiday on account of the death of the first Emperor Jimmu Tennō, who was born about 640 B.C. Images of this illustrious person are pulled round the streets on carts, children follow dressed in the quaintest of gaudy costumes, and at night the whole cart is illuminated with candles and lanterns, the followers forming a befitting procession, armed with Japanese lanterns hung on sticks, and setting up a continuous howl called music. This is a day on

which the people get jovially intoxicated; small stages are built all over the country, and the village comedians give an exhibition of their talent, singing, dancing, and distorting their faces in all manner of terrible ways. A *saké* barrel accompanies the performers, and as the row they make is bound to give them dry throats, they have not far to go—usually under the stage—to quench their thirst. After this they have a terribly long spell without pleasure—till the 5th of May—four long weary weeks.

On the fifth day of the fifth month the boys have their innings, called *Tango no Sekku*, when every house is bedecked with paper fish hung from long bamboo poles. The streets look gay arrayed with these huge carp, the larger ones at the top and smaller below. There is a fish for every boy in the house, but whether each male is only allowed one or not, I never gathered. To judge from the number of fish—sometimes twelve or more hung from one pole—the male population of families must be prodigious. The paper fish are hollow with open mouths and so are blown about in the wind, the hope being that the boys will some day float as bravely up the stream of life as the fish do. Some are beautifully painted and designed; their silvery scales shining



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17. TANGO NO SEKKU.



in the sun. This is, however, only the outward sign of the *Tango no Sekku* or boys' festival. The shops all exhibit such wares as bows and arrows, targets, swords, and wooden sabres, to remind the boys of the implements used by their elders in warfare, and of the duties they owe to their country should she be at war, just as two months before the girls, by their dolls and pans, were reminded of their duties in the house, and towards their younger sisters and brothers.

These are recognised holidays, but that does not hinder the people from making holiday when such shows as the cherry-blossom or chrysanthemum festivals are in season. Provided the day is fine, every one turns out to enjoy the sights.

The seventh day of the seventh month witnesses a more poetic festival. Bamboo poles are stuck about in different places, and strips of paper suspended from them, bearing poetical allusions to two constellations on either side of the Milky Way. The story is founded on some fiction of Chinese origin, in which, according to Professor Chamberlain, Aquila the herdsman is in love with Vega the weaving girl. I will quote the Professor's own words: "The weaving girl was so constantly kept employed in making

garments for the offspring of the Emperor of Heaven —in other words, God—that she had no leisure to attend to the adornment of her person. . . . God, taking compassion on her loneliness, gave her in marriage to the herdsman. . . . Hereupon the woman began to grow remiss in her work. God in his anger then made her recross the river . . . forbidding her husband to visit her more than once a year"—namely, on the 7th of July. This festival is called the Evening of Stars, when offerings are made and prayers offered up to the two constellations.

A few days after this the Feast of Lanterns, the *Bon Matsuri*, takes place, also of Chinese origin, when the inhabitants go to visit the graves of their ancestors, and partake of a feast at the tombs. Chinese crackers are fired off, lanterns hung out, and the priests invoke the gods by incantations. In China the use of fireworks is much more prevalent than in Japan, though many of her customs originate from there. In China, whenever a boat or junk sets sail down the river, the sailors beat a huge gong and rend the air with crackers and squibs to drive away the devil. They firmly believe that no journey would be propitious unless they intimidated the Evil One beforehand. If any pestilence pervades a city, the officials have strict injunctions

to fire rifles all night to allay the curse that has visited them, and reports are made to the Emperor or his subordinates next day to say that the dragon or devil has decamped or been killed. Such is the superstition of the Eastern nations.

On the ninth day of the ninth month another holiday comes round, also based on some Chinese legend, when a liquor is drunk made from a labiate plant resembling the flower of an antirrhinum, and prayers are offered up to the god of that particular flower.

In October one of the Shichi Fukujin—the seven gods of luck—has his day, because he is the only god who remains in his own temple instead of wandering off to hold a consultation with his brother gods at Izumo. His name is Ebisu, and he is generally depicted as fully dressed (an exception to what is usual amongst the gods), and with a rod, to the end of which a *koi* or carp is attached. This benign person also wears a moustache and goatee, and on account of his loneliness is particularly honoured in this month.

The holidays are drawing to a close—only one more before the year has run its course—which falls in the middle of November. It is the day when all

children of three years' standing cease to have their heads shaved. From this age their heads begin to heal from the eczema, which must have been a source of great discomfort to them and an eyesore to others; and their mothers generally wean them at this time too, though sometimes not until the child is five or six. Thus ends the year, and after the remaining six weeks the people are anxious for New Year to come round once again.

Let my reader not suppose that these "few" holidays are the only relaxation the Japanese indulge in. Besides having all our games to amuse them, they have hundreds of their own. It is extraordinary the aptitude they show in becoming efficient at all the English sports. At base-ball they can beat almost any American team; a boy will throw the ball into the air, and with the most certain accuracy drive it an enormous distance. Where they are handicapped is in running, because of their *kimonos*, which are very apt to trip them up or get between their legs. It is rather dangerous to get anywhere near a game of base-ball, because they are as apt to play it in an open square as anywhere, and an onlooker or passer-by may find himself measuring his length on the ground. Cricket, football, and polo are indulged in with a

great amount of zeal, though the latter is quite a new institution amongst them.

Hopscotch, tops, kites, battledore and shuttlecock, fencing, archery, puss-in-the-corner, and all manner of other games are played there as with us; in fact, almost every game except (at least when I was there) ping-pong. That, so far, has escaped reaching as far East as Japan—and they can do without it—because their *samisen* music makes up for the equally discordant sounds produced by ping-pong.

The Japanese are extremely clever jugglers, amongst the finest in the world, and even the smallest children are adepts at keeping several balls going at once. They run round a room with four or more balls on the move, throw them over their heads, and catch them again behind their backs. There is no limit to the amount of ingenuity they display at inventing new ball tricks, and it seems one of the favourite indoor amusements amongst the girls. Sometimes they have matches in which the losers pay a forfeit, and for every miss receive a dab on the cheek with a paint brush from the winner. They will juggle with several balls, and clap their hands when these are in the air, or catch them in one hand and pass a fan over or under them with the

other in rapid succession. The boys indulge in a more boisterous game, not unlike our rounders, but which they play with a harder ball and attempt to hit each other whilst running. The accuracy of their aim is astonishing, and it requires a fast sprinter to evade being hit with some considerable force.

Their most marvellous feat is accomplished with tops. They will spin a top, throw it into the air, and catch it on the blade of a sword, or allow it to spin up and down the edge. At times they spin a top, raise it on to one arm, and by wriggling their bodies, allow the top to pass along one arm, round the neck, and down the other arm. Some of their tops are wonderfully made. Outwardly they resemble an ordinary humming-top, but made of boxwood, which, when spun, will throw out five or six baby tops, and so you see suddenly a whole family of tops spinning merrily on. I have seen two top spinners throw these spinning tops to each other and catch them on the blade of a knife.

Most people have heard about and probably seen the paper butterfly trick performed by Japanese. They place three screens or boards around them, hand round a piece of white tissue paper for inspection, and, when the audience have satisfied themselves that there

is no deception, will proceed to cut the paper into the shape of a butterfly. By the aid of a fan and carefully regulated currents of air—which they can alter by means of the screens—they will keep one or more butterflies fluttering about the room. The paper butterfly, with outstretched wings, will alight for a fraction of a second on the man's hand or on a flower and then hover about again. It is a wonderful exhibition of skill, and I firmly believe there is no deception. I have taken pains to discover a hair or thin piece of wire either attached to the fan, paper, or some piece of furniture, but was unable to do so. I have handled the paper before and after the performance, but always without detecting any fraud, and have even attempted to keep the butterfly on the move, but with invariably the same result—hopeless failure. If there is a hair attached it is so cleverly done that the naked eye cannot detect where it has been fixed to the paper, and with that unsatisfactory solution I must leave you to discover a more satisfactory one for yourself.

As acrobats the Japanese probably excel any other nation. Not content with performing their tricks on a stage platform or open street, they profane their temples with all manner of acrobatic feats, though they do not indulge in them to the same extent as the

Chinese. No acrobatic feat seems to puzzle them, and I have seen a man balance himself on one hand and with the other juggle with balls to his heart's content. With the greatest coolness and deliberation they will go through their turns in the open street or on an impromptu stage, and there is seldom a hitch or a fall. Until they have mastered a particular trick they will not perform in public.

The favourite house game amongst girls and women is what is called *kitsune*, or fox. Two girls sit opposite each other, holding a piece of cord with a loop in the middle. The object of the game is for a third party to grab a piece of cake on the opposite side of the loop before she gets her hand caught. If she gets caught she pays a *ken*, or forfeit; if she reaches the cake she may enjoy it. Another form is called *kitsune ken*, in which the fingers are held in different positions, or placed on the hips or shoulder. The idea is that different positions denote a fox, gun, and man. Thus, if one girl makes the man sign and the other the gun sign, the former wins, because the man is supposed to rank above the gun, and the gun is considered more deadly than the fox. As can be imagined, each sign does not take long to make, and so one

might be led to suspect that the game would, after a short time, become monotonous; but between each sign the girls clap hands and sing a verse or two of a song, so that they should not be thinking about what sign to make next; and with the last word of the song the players show hands. Another game like this is what is called *hana hana*, in which one player touches different parts of her face, and the other must follow suit. As, for instance, one player will say *hana hana* (nose, nose), whilst pointing to her cheek, and the other must not imitate her companion's fingers, but touch that part of her face which her friend mentions—her nose, and not her cheek. If they lose they again pay a *ken*. Sometimes another form of *ken* is played in which no apparatus is required. Two persons sit opposite each other with closed fists, and at a given signal they open their hands simultaneously, showing one, two, three, four, or five fingers. If the shower displays four fingers and her opponent three, she wins; but if they are both alike, the person who guesses takes the prize, or demands the forfeit, and blacks her companion's face. It may seem an unnecessarily severe punishment for the loss of a game to have your face dabbed with black paint, but

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not when one takes into consideration the fact that every house has all the implements ready at hand. When the Japanese write they do not use pen and ink, but brush and paint; and so dabbing each other's faces seems to them the most natural and handy score with which to pay their debt.

The Japanese are born gamblers, though not to the same extent as the Chinese. A Chinaman will gamble for anything; and it is not uncommon to see them tossing or playing some game of chance with a hawker or a street food-seller for their daily bread. Their last farthing will go at a game of *fan-tan*, or some other gamble; night after night they will visit their dens and play until they have barely a stitch of clothing to go about with. In Japan gambling has to a great extent been suppressed by the Government, but horse-racing and card-playing are greatly in vogue. Their cards are quite different to those we use; instead of numbers they have flowers painted on them—*hana*, as they are called. They are divided into twelve sets of four, each set having flowers of the different months. Thus cherry blossom will denote April, and the four April cards will be again distinguished by a different mark, or by writing.



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18. THE FEAST OF JIMMU TENNŌ.



Poker has also been introduced amongst the gentry in Tokyo, but *à la Japonaise;* and then they call the cards *turampu*, to distinguish them from the *hana-garuta*, or flower cards.

One more word upon the games—on one that is indulged in only by the grown-up children on account of its difficulties—the *go*. It is not unlike our chess, but harder and more intricate. I often watched them playing it on board ship, and though some of them were kind enough to teach me the rudiments of the game, I was more baffled at the end than before I tried to learn it. Sometimes it takes hours to finish a game; and my advice is, do not attempt to learn it if you want to remain sane. The board is divided by nineteen cross and horizontal lines forming squares, which makes 361 intersections. Mr. A. covers his crosses with 181 white stones, and Mr. B. with 180 black ones. The object of the game is to secure your opponent's stones, and, as in chess, to defend your own side.

Throughout the life of a Japanese, games form the great item of amusement. They read little, because their literature is scanty, and so when they have a little spare time they indulge in some form of recreation by playing one of the games I have

enumerated. If they cannot take an active part, they are perfectly content to watch others.

Imagine an aged gentleman with grey hair flying a kite for pure amusement, playing marbles, or spinning tops. We should term it second childhood, but in Japan that is unknown; they are born children, and die children.

Although Sir Rutherford Alcock flatters the country by saying it is a paradise of babies, even such a paradise has its disadvantages. It is almost impossible to walk five yards in Tokyo without running down, or being run down by, a score or more children. It is hardly safe to drive along the streets, and so coolies are employed as fore-runners to clear the way. When these men are tired they climb up behind the carriage, or assist pulling horses and carriages up hills.

One more word before I close this chapter. I do not wish it to be taken as disrespectful to the Japanese, because in a foreign language none of us are infallible; but when you see painted on a sign-board, garnished with gaudy colours, "Manifacters of Hare, barbers shaving and shamboo," it makes one smile. They are an extraordinary nation at inventing words and names. A Japanese will take

an English dictionary and concoct the most ungrammatical sentence imaginable, firmly believing his fortune is made. He may not be far wrong, because the absurdity of some of their sign-boards is bound to attract the attention of passers-by, who will enter those shops to purchase some article or other.

"A shop for to the make of Goods
from silk worms and other animal merchants."

This outside a large shop where some of the best Japanese embroideries are made. A Japanese may ask an Englishman what sign to print over his shop, possibly a public-house. In all good faith the Englishman may tell him, "Sellers of ales and spirits, wholesale and retail." The man, not quite grasping the pronunciation, will distort what you told him into

"Cellera of ails and spilites
Holesail and letael."

Labels of beer bottles are works of originality, if not of art. They are, however, the attempts of the Japanese to imitate the ways of the Europeans, and their shortcomings must be forgiven them.

CHAPTER VI

THE GEISHA

My friend and I spent some time at Kioto, and took a great interest in trying to study the people according to their different vocations in life. It is a study which, in order to do justice to each individual calling, would take a lifetime to learn. Some, of course, are more interesting than others, but Kioto probably affords one more opportunity of seeing the different manufactures and life of the people than any other town. There it is possible to see everything, though another town might be better for the study of a particular industry.

What interested me most apart from the works of art, of which Kioto is the centre, were the Geisha, because it enabled me to notice the differences between a town and country Geisha; it is almost a pity that the same name is given to each. The country Geisha as one sees her at Japanese houses is a person uncorrupted in the moral sense, unaffected beyond the affectation essential to her calling, unpretentious be-

cause she seems too innocent and artistic, and because it is the only thing she really cares for. In the towns the Geisha who are trotted out to perform before the average European might shock even many women who call themselves broad-minded; they coquette, flirt, and fling themselves about. They are little better, in fact, than the European music-hall people who profane the word by calling themselves artists; still, they are better, and they act in that way merely because the Europeans have taught them to do it. The European man has ruined the morality of the Japanese, and they will probably never regain it, because they realise that it means money, an increase in individual wealth, but it probably also means destruction sooner or later of the country, certainly of the social side of it. Japan, if she continues to modernise her women as rapidly as she has done, is doomed to have the whole of her society brought down to that point to which the society of Europe has become degraded. It is difficult even to say in which country in Europe it is worst.

In this chapter I will try to limit my description to the country Geisha, and leave the other to those whom she fascinates more.

I was staying at a tea-house in a village noted for

its Geisha troupe, and as it was April, and the cherry trees were in blossom, was enabled to witness a performance of the cherry dance. Let me try to explain as graphically as possible what took place.

The room was rather larger than is usually the case in these houses, and at one end were several cushions for the accommodation of the spectators. Shortly after we had taken our seats the partitions were silently drawn apart, and there, salaaming on the ground, their hands palm downwards, and their faces buried in them, were nine little Geisha girls, robed in the most exquisite dresses imaginable; the *kimonos* trailing, thickly quilted at the bottom, on the ground round their feet, the *obi*, of a different colour to the dress itself, held in place by a narrow piece of silk cord of another shade, the lining of the sleeve picked out with silk of a varying tone, and yet, though each colour was absolutely different, all were in harmony with each other, and with the surroundings nothing clashed.

They rose, shuffled into the room (not wobbled, as one sees them imitated here), and bowed again, bending almost to the ground, their bodies, legs, and arms forming in each case three sides of a square. Then the performance commenced. The nine took up their



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19. THE GEISHA.

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positions squatting on their heels, the singers and dancers in the centre, and the musicians, four in number, two on each side of them. The musicians at once commenced unstrapping their instruments, and so long as they were merely unstrapping them, we showed a lively interest in what they were doing; but they soon began tuning them, according to their ideas of tuning, not ours. The dancers at this stage drew out from beneath the folds of their dresses small "make-up" boxes containing their paints, which, with the assistance of water and a cloth, they mixed and smeared over their faces. So intent were they upon beautifying themselves that they seemed absolutely to ignore the very existence of visitors; there, in the presence of interested spectators, they commenced painting their cheeks, pencilling their eyebrows, and rouging their lips. If they did not consider pink lips suited their particular fancy, they would rub it off again, and change the colour to whatever they thought more consistent with the surroundings.

The beautifying over, the band commenced to play, and the Geishas to sing; song and music were both equally harsh to our ears. It may seem to them —educated to those sounds—harmony, but to the ears of a Westerner it was the most awful noise imagin-

able; a German band in England, an Italian barrel-organ, or a poor street singer, are all preferable to the ounds of discord we were treated to, and had the music continued much longer without the diversion of dancing, we could not have remained to hear it. With the opening chords, however, the dancing began; the five remaining Geishas rose slowly from the ground, and all together in unison, each with a branch of cherry blossoms in her hand, commenced the most beautiful dance I have ever witnessed; each movement, each bend of their thin, lithe bodies, each turn of the head equally graceful—nowhere can such grace and such dancing be seen in so much perfection —no rustle of skirts, no high-kicking, or attempts on the part of the performers to attract the attention of their spectators by winks and grimaces—nothing done except to charm, and everything done for pure love of dancing, and not because dire necessity compels. Therein lies the success of Japan, no matter in what; they act, dance, work, in fact do everything, with their hearts in what they are doing, oblivious of their surroundings. Where, upon the European dancing stage at music-halls, can the same thing be said? In most cases the *danseuse* goes through her turns more like a machine than a human being;

night after night she performs probably the same dance, sings the same songs, and the more vulgar her song, the more applause she gets. She acts merely for her audience, and plays up to them; whilst in the East every dancer is an artist, pure and simple: she dances because she likes it, and is graceful because she is taught it from her infancy. A Geisha does not spring up in one day. She is educated to it from her earliest childhood, taught to sing, dance, or play on musical instruments. She studies with her heart in the work she wishes to perfect. In Japan she is the person to entertain; no party is complete without her; she is, in fact, to Japan and to the Japanese Court, what the king's jester was in Europe in times gone by. Her repartee is extraordinary, she knows everything worth knowing, she must be posted up in all the latest scandal, should know the best stories; and with these she amuses her audience when it is satiated with dancing and music. She is the toy of society, its playmate and entertainer; no one takes her seriously; her vocation in life is to amuse and to please.

Of beauty, the less said the better, because beauty at the best of times is but skin deep, and, when painted over with rouge and rice-water, a little deeper

still. What, after all, is beauty? It is merely an impression of the mind, which, according as one is differently constituted, may or may not appeal to that particular sense where the beautiful is felt; it is that which pleases: and as different things please different persons, so beauty may instil a feeling of admiration and love in one person, whilst another may be impervious to its attractions. The beauty of the Geisha lies not merely in the dress or face, and all that appertains to it, but in the whole—the dancing, movement, and colouring.

In European burlesques, when one sees an imitation of a Japanese lady, whether Geisha or otherwise, she wobbles on to the stage, with both hands stuck out sideways, her dress—a poor representation of the *kimono*—far too short and tight-fitting, and high-heeled shoes on her feet. The Geisha cannot walk like that, because, in the first place, their *kimonos*, which trail on the floor, will not allow it; they would trip at each step: and secondly, because they wear sandals which are not fixed to the feet, and so, were they to lift them, they would be perpetually losing or running after their slippers. Europeans have, of late, been privileged to see a Japanese in her native dress shuffle across the stage, if they saw Madame Yakko,

who acted for some time in London, and previously in America. If those stage managers who attempt to introduce Geisha dances on their stages had seen Yakko, they would never make the ludicrous representations and imitations they have made.

Directly the performance was over, and the "musical" instruments (pardon the use of the word musical) had been packed away, some of these Geisha retired to the kitchen, and entered after a few moments with all the delicacies (according to their ideas) imaginable, all neatly arranged on a beautiful lacquer tray. This was placed on a low table, a few inches only from the ground. Another Geisha entered with a kind of teapot and small egg-cups, which she proceeded to fill with the contents of the pot. The liquid looked like very weak tea, but we were informed it was *saké*, the national beverage, which was served hot. Let him who takes a fancy to *saké*, which in taste is not unlike weak sherry, beware not to take it to excess; it is not strong so long as only a moderate amount of it is consumed; but take too much—even if it only makes one amusing instead of intoxicated—and the follies of the night haunt one all next day. Lamp-posts are sought for diligently next morning to cool the feverish head; the way

that poor head has to suffer for the modest excess is cruel.

With this *saké*, which is a kind of liqueur, sweetmeats are served, an equivalent of the American cocktail so invariably indulged in there before meals. As I said before, Japanese do everything backwards; they serve liqueurs and sweets before the fish and entrées. After these have been demolished, and perhaps even by some relished, soup is served in small china bowls, then fish of various kinds, some raw, others smoked, fried, or boiled. Each person has a number of small bowls placed before him on a lacquer tray, and, with the aid of chopsticks, tries to satisfy his appetite. Raw fish does not sound tempting, nor yet does it look appetising, but so daintily is it served by these little girls that one is apt to forget what the bowl really contains, and eats it before one realises what it is. Every tray would be incomplete without the inevitable dish of boiled rice; and it is by eating this that one can display any skill one possesses in the use of chopsticks. Fish is hard to eat with two pieces of wood, but when it comes to a mash which will not adhere to the sticks, the difficulty becomes appalling.

After the Geisha had served round the dinner, they

tuned up again, emitting from their instruments that plaintive wail we had heard before. The sound resembled badly played banjos out of tune and the noise of ping-pong intermingled. The others danced again, and sang as they moved about, gliding across the room, now bending back, now posing, and with their fans gracefully held above their heads they told their stories. So wonderful are their posings and movements that one can understand plainly what their legends mean. The words of the song are unintelligible, but by following the turnings of their bodies and expressions on their faces, one is able to comprehend what they are talking about.

Sometimes a man will also dance or recite. When he does so, he seems to be so engrossed in what he is doing that he is quite oblivious of his surroundings. Should he recite something in which a man, at first sane, suddenly through grief becomes demented, he works himself up to such a pitch of madness and frenzy as to quite alarm the spectators. If he imitates what is known as the devil's dance, the impersonation is so weird as to almost terrify one. He rushes about the room, emitting from his lips sounds terrible to hear, his eyes roll, so that at times the iris disappears entirely, his veins stand out, he is capable of altering

the colour of his face at will; one moment it will appear calm and white, the next almost crimson and convulsed with rage.

At the end of the performance, such an extraordinary effect have these various dances on the mind, that applause seems out of place; one is unable to give vent to the feelings experienced. It is just as impossible to applaud the Geisha as it would be to applaud a fine sermon in a church, or a performance of "Parsifal" at Bayreuth; one is carried beyond the stage of mere enjoyment and pleasure—it impresses one to such an extent that the only desire is to be left alone to think. To go away and hear some one say, "It was really very pretty," would be as crushing a blow to the imagination as to attempt to discuss a fine piece of weird scenery when one is in full view of it.

The musical instruments are housed again in their shells, paint boxes, and all the paraphernalia of a Geisha, are packed away, and the little girls at once proceed to change their *kimonos* for some of more sombre colours. This they do in full view of every one, but with such delicacy that the most narrow-minded, modest person could not blush. It would be hard to blush at anything a Geisha does or says,

it is done and said so naturally; one would as readily be shocked at some *faux pas* a child might make. Whilst they are slipping off one *kimono*, the other takes its place, so that at no period of the change can anything be seen which is not supposed to be seen. The *obi* is then tied and fixed in place by the aid of the silk cord, and the little Geisha is transformed from a dancing-girl, a toy, into a beautiful lady of society, a sedate little woman. She takes her seat amongst her audience, and partakes of her supper. It is a most interesting sight, after one has battled with chopsticks for some time, to witness the deft way in which these little ladies handle them—nothing ever seems to fall—they hold a piece of fish as tightly as if it had been fixed in a vice; and to see them pick up peas from a plate or out of a bowl is a tuition. They will pick up several hundreds in the same time as it would take an inexperienced "chopsticker" to pick up two—the dainty way in which they eat is remarkable—their manners always perfect, manners such as even the last of the dandies would have done well to imitate.

The whole time a continual chatter is kept up, jokes are cracked, stories told at which they giggle as only a Geisha can. It is always a sad moment when

the "*sayōnara*"—good-bye—comes; one experiences the same feelings as one does after seeing one's best friend off at a station, a feeling of melancholy.

In Europe the name Geisha has, I think, been wrongly interpreted. People often imagine that every tea-house girl is a Geisha; they imagine, in fact, that a Geisha is a person who merely ogles the men, flirts, and behaves like most European barmaids. They are wrong; in the Treaty Ports I acknowledge that the Geisha are rather more "free" than in smaller places inland; but then the Treaty Ports do not (merely because more Europeans visit them, and in that way teach them what they know to exist at home) justify the theory that a Geisha is not a lady whom a respectable person would not care to know or invite to her house. The Geisha at Tokyo or other large towns are no real Geisha at all, because they look upon their performances from the point of view of trade, and have ceased to be artists as they are inland.



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20. A TEA PARTY.

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CHAPTER VII

THE STAGE

After travelling for some weeks only in the interior of Japan, away from the beaten tracks, where the life of the country could be studied and the wonders of nature admired to one's heart's content, I at length arrived at Tokyo. To be in a European hotel again and sleep on a spring mattress fell little short of a novelty.

Walking along one of the streets I saw a crowd of people. All seemed to be talking together and gesticulating wildly. The reason of this was that Danjūrō was giving a performance inside the house where all these people were gathered, and as I discovered it was the interval time I took seats in a box to witness what turned out to be the finest piece of acting I have ever seen. Though barely understanding two consecutive words of stage Japanese, I could with ease follow the plot of the story. The theatre resembled nothing I had ever seen before. The whole

floor was covered with what looked like small square boxes, each with a door. Each box held perhaps six or eight persons squatting on the ground. The floor, in fact, seemed covered with a mass of black heads and coloured *kimonos*. Round the theatre ran a broad gangway, and above this were boxes, in one of which I secured a seat.

It was about 2 P.M. when I reached the theatre, and was told the performance had begun at 11 A.M. and would end about 8 P.M. The floor of the theatre when empty looks like a chess-board. Soon the people took their places again, the curtain rose, and the play went on.

To see one act alone is a revelation. Danjūrō walked in stately grandeur down one of the gangways amongst the audience, and when on the stage gave the finest piece of acting any one could see. The scenery was unpretentious; certainly it could hardly be compared to any scenic effects in some of the large European theatres, but being unpretentious it gave one more opportunity of witnessing and enjoying the acting qualities of the performers. The opening act depicted a row between two men over a woman; not the usual stage woman, a lovely creature in still more lovely dresses, but one impersonated by a man, and

that man was Danjūrō. The act proceeded; the men, after many gesticulations, fought a desperate duel with curved swords, called *katana*, in which one unfortunate was killed. His death-struggle was wonderful; he took nearly five minutes to die. The fair lady (Danjūrō) the whole time looked on, but the remaining man seemed so perturbed at what he had done that he took poison, and the heroine, feeling alone in the world, followed his example. Danjūrō's death was the most realistic performance imaginable. He writhed on the floor, his face terribly contorted, and his body bent almost double with imaginary pain. The Occidental lady would have reclined gracefully on a sofa, careful that no frills were showing; her face would have the same beautiful complexion procured by No. 3 grease paint. When all had succeeded in dying they did not, as with us, spring to life again and bow gracefully to the applause of their audience, but remained, as far as the spectators were concerned, dead.

When the curtain descended, instead of hand-clapping, the audience jumped up and rushed to the curtain, which they lifted, and watched with huge interest the setting of the next scene. It seemed quite the thing to do, and was evidently included in the price of their seats. Whilst the younger genera-

tion were amusing themselves by watching and talking to the scene-shifters, the elder ones seemed to enjoy a good hearty meal. They had brought all the paraphernalia requisite for tea-making, and with dried fish, sweets, and *saké*, seemed to be satisfying their appetites to their hearts' content. Smoking of course is permitted throughout the day. In place of the electric bell to summon the people to take their seats a deafening sound rent the air caused by gongs, drums, and other noisy instruments. The band then broke out into strains of disquieting music, which has already been described in another place, and continued to do so throughout the remainder of the day.

The second piece was a comedy, in which a renowned comedian took part. His face seemed to be made of indiarubber; he was able to completely alter it in a second, as also was Danjūrō, whose real name is Horikoshi Shū, with of course the usual appellation of "san" stuck at the end, which, however, only means Mr. or Miss according to the sex of the individual in question. The versatility of Danjūrō is marvellous. Though now an old man he can dance and tire out hundreds who are younger than he is. The power he has over the muscles of his face

would teach a doctor of great learning that he did not understand his anatomy, because he would never believe such contortions possible. Without paint or any make-up he can alter the expression of his face in a most astounding way. One eye turns up and the other down, or both roll round in opposite directions with equal facility. When he is mad, he looks every inch a madman; when he plays the part of a drunkard, you can hardly imagine him sober, so realistic is the performance.

The dress on the stage is rather different to their modern costumes. They still imitate the *daimyos*, nearly all carry swords, and wear their hair with the pigtail under a kind of cap sticking out at the back. They do not walk in the ordinary sense of the word, they strut, their knees almost touching their chins. Sir Henry Irving's stage-walk is the nearest approach to anything analogous to the Japanese stage gymnastics. It is a feat in itself, and must require a great deal of practice. A German infantry regiment marching before the Kaiser may give those who have not studied Sir Henry's walk some idea of the stately manner in which the Japanese actors walk. Every muscle is strained, every attitude as unnatural as possible; the parade in both cases is equally ludicrous.

In the one, however, they do it because all actors have walked like that for generations past, and so it appears less absurd than in Germany where the small, fat infantryman, with head erect (he could probably not see his feet even were he to look down), shoulders braced, and legs thrown out in unison with the band, performs his antics to the "Parade March."

Actors are usually descended from a family of actors. Danjūrō is the ninth who has distinguished himself on the stage.

The dresses themselves are richly covered with gold and silver, and the silk is of the heaviest, and so will last for many generations.

Until quite recently the actors, and in fact the whole theatrical world of Japan, was looked down on; but some years ago the Mikado attended a performance, and since then actors have been received in the best societies. Formerly, if any one respectable went to a theatre he went in disguise, and when the census was taken (to give an idea of the disgrace they were subjected to) they were counted, not as human beings, but like animals, *ippiki ni-hiki*, &c., instead of *ichi nin*, *ni nin*, *san nin*, *shi nin*, and *go nin*—the *nin* standing for person—that is, one person, two persons—whilst *hiki* at the end of the numerals denotes some beast

or other. Thus *ippiki* or *ichi hiki* stands for one beast, &c. The people who used to attend the theatres were the lower middle classes.

One striking peculiarity about the stage in Japan is the lack of stage effects. No drop-scene will ever have a moon cut out of the canvas and a candle behind to illuminate her or pin holes to represent stars. It appears too unnatural to the mind of a Japanese; he would sooner paste a piece of paper over the place where he wants the moon to shine and write on it, "This is the moon," or "These are stars." The whole stage, in fact, is comparatively bare. The lights are worked not by means of electric or lime-light, but by a sort of hooded man in black, who carries a candle round illuminating what he wants lighted up. These black goblins hurry about from one side to the other, and apparently are as little noticed by the audience as the prompter who stands behind the man that speaks, and when that man has finished, hurries to the next spokesman. At first this is rather apt to distract one's attention, and the plot seems in consequence more difficult to follow, but soon one becomes so engrossed in the acting that the prompter and light workers perform their tasks unnoticed. Another peculiarity is their great dislike to

make use of any animals on the stage. One would never see a horse or dog brought on to perform some antic; it has been tried, but every time with the most disastrous effects. Though trained to perfection before its début, it has in every case given no end of trouble, and refused to do credit to its trainer when the time for its public performance arrived. In the place of live animals they will substitute something equally effective though possibly less realistic.

If a man dies during a scene black men again come on and cart him off; he might be in the way were he to remain there dead, and the space is generally limited. The theatres are probably the only remnants of old Japan which still exist; the old costumes still survive, and the old language is still to be heard on the Japanese stage.

The theatres of Japan date back many centuries. In fact, in the first written records of Japan, mention is made of the *no*, as it was called. It consisted of dances of a religious kind, and songs which hardly differed from Buddhistic chants and hymns. Later, acting was also introduced in conjunction with a chorus, and was generally carried out by the recitation of poems of a dramatic nature. The *no* has not been entirely done away with, but has ceased to be a



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21. A STAGE.

public performance, and now is only carried out by those nobles who have had it handed down to them from their ancestors. The old language is still adhered to, and the spectators follow the play, book in hand, because the language is as hard for them to understand as Shakespearian plays are in many cases to us. The present method of having the orchestra performing during the whole of the play may have originated with the *no*.

After the *no* actors came the *kabuki* actors, who were as much despised as the others were honoured. The styles of the two were absolutely different, and may be distinguished by saying that the *no* theatres represent theatres where classical plays are performed, to which the more learned people go; whilst the *kabuki* theatres are more analogous to our music-halls or theatres in small provincial places. If any man of respectable standing visited a *kabuki* theatre, he generally found it advisable to go in disguise, so as to avoid having aspersions cast on his character, or else had to remain at home. Now every one visits the theatres, and it has become one of their chief sources of amusement.



CHAPTER VIII

CIVILISATION

As soon as a country is discovered, and in the case of Japan the discovery dates back as far as 1542, the religious question is the first that is considered. Through the medium of religion nations hope to effect the civilisation they wish to establish.

I do not mean to suggest that Japan was a land of savages, who, through the influence of Europeanism, became transformed into a nation more analogous to our own. By civilisation I mean the development a nation undergoes, whether it entails an improvement or not—the importation of new ideas and methods.

If a nation is civilised it must of necessity lose much of its originality and individuality. It must become like the nations who wish to effect that civilisation. If an inartistic nation lands in a country where every man is an artist, those people must of

necessity become less artistic, because of the changes of ideas that are instilled into them.

Japan's real introduction to the civilised world cannot be said to have commenced until Commodore Perry landed from America and concluded a treaty by which certain ports were to be opened to American ships. That was barely fifty years ago, and since then, by rapid strides, other treaties have been effected with England and other European Powers, and the civilisation of the country has been undertaken by the peoples of Europe. No country has so readily conformed to the ideas of her masters as Japan has done. In these few years she has risen from a nonentity to a nation that can cope with almost any other. The fact, however, remains, that although the change may have been beneficial to her from the standpoint of trade and commerce, and has enabled her to rank as an equal with the nations of Europe, yet it has been detrimental to the morality of her people, and has destroyed much of her art and the greater portion of her individuality.

Take the countries of Europe and compare them with those of the East. In the one case the people, their customs, houses, everything is the same, based on modern conventionality. If a man builds a house

not in conformity with the prevailing style, he is said to be eccentric. In Europe no man, woman, or child is allowed—except in theory—to do as he likes, and should he transgress and become unconventional, his neighbours are shocked, his friends and relations turn against him as impossible.

How different in the East, where conventionality was unheard of in the broader sense of the word. There every man thought, said, and did what he liked, dressed as he chose, and went where he wanted, no man to forbid him or call him eccentric, no formulæ upon which, if he wished to conform to the rules of society, he was forced to act. By conventionality I mean the conformability to such rules or doctrines as are consistent with the modern ideas of modern society.

By attempting to civilise a nation you destroy every spark of originality that country formerly possessed. The change may be slow, but provided that country conforms to the modernisation, the destruction is at length bound to be complete.

What has the result of civilisation been to Japan? It has destroyed, or gone a great step towards destroying, one of its chief characteristics, its universal art. Formerly every man, woman, and child in that

country was a born artist, but through the change it has undergone, much of the artistic feeling has been destroyed. Examine the records of the country, go step by step over its history, and compare it with the Japan of to-day.

Civilisation and modern trains of thought have brought the country to the fore, have increased its trade, and found a market for its merchandise and manufactures; but they have also killed, stamped out, annihilated even, to a certain extent, its most priceless possession, its artistic taste. It still exists, but now articles are manufactured for which formerly a man would have been shunned had he dared to produce such a thing. The Japanese are far too clever not to realise that unless they conform in a certain degree to the demands of civilised nations they are doomed to remain poor. They have learnt by experience that unless they make things—no matter how repugnant their manufacture may be to them—to satisfy the wants of the less artistic world, they lose the much coveted gold. But they are also clever enough not to destroy all their originality or artistic taste—though it would have been small blame to them had they done so—and therefore Japan is one of the few nations that has been able to conform to the demands

of civilisation and still retain a certain amount of its individuality.

Every country has its own particular methods, the people their own ways of living, dressing, and thinking, and so long as these still exist the country remains interesting; but attempt to civilise it and you destroy those methods. People begin to see things with different eyes, their standpoints are altered, they begin to move in a different sphere. Ancient customs are done away with, originality in dress is dropped for the garments of civilised nations, the whole aspect of the country is changed, yes, even their very thoughts, the only thing a man can call his own. They become enlightened, mix with people of other nations, notice the introduction of modern appliances and the works of modern brains; the country grows and expands, its inhabitants become wealthy, and with wealth their first degradation commences. Those who acquire riches, at first small, seek for more; they realise that in order to obtain it they must rob and cheat their neighbours. And from whom have they learnt it? From no others than from the nations who attempted that civilisation. What has the civilisation of Japan done for that country? Not only has it destroyed much of its art, it has also taught the nation dishonesty. Why are

the Japanese a band of rogues in business, who will put their names to any document, enter upon any contract, and the next moment repudiate it and their signatures too? The answer is simple, and contained in the one word "civilisation."

The Europeans came over to Japan and found there a country devoted to agriculture, no man rich, in our modern sense of the word, every man practically his own master to do what he wanted; a simple-minded, moral nation.

Practically, every nation that is uncivilised is moral, because they have not been taught to distinguish between morality and immorality. Civilisation opens their eyes, Europeans teach them, and missionaries attempt to suppress what they term immorality, but which in reality is only innocence.

The first settlers found their harvest in Japan, they lent money to the nation, who did not even understand the relative value of silver and gold, plundered the inhabitants, took advantage of their ignorance, and the Japanese were helpless, because they were too uneducated to see the follies they were committing. In this instance, civilisation has been a boon to them, because the people awoke and saw how they were being swindled. The climax came, and the

nation retaliated with the same weapons. They found it easy to acquire wealth by imitating those who had robbed them, and the consequence is that it is now almost impossible to get the better of a Japanese. They have learnt their lesson and paid the price demanded. Formerly the country was divided into two sets, the rich and the poor. The middle class was hardly known; a man was either a *daimyo* or a labourer.

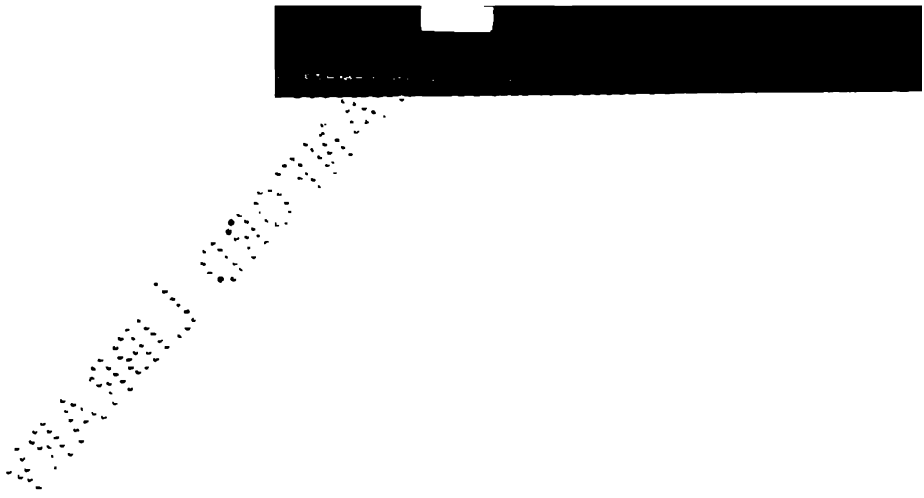
In less than twenty years Japan has acquired the knowledge it has taken us centuries to learn. In a few years they have built a fleet, which for the size of the country is magnificent—one that could compare favourably with almost any European navy. They have employed European engineers to build that fleet, gunners to teach them the use and mechanism of modern guns, and instructors to train their men, and now Japan is capable of declaring war on almost any other nation.

Japan really made her début in the world-history when she declared war on China. What man in Europe ever divined the correct outcome of that war? Every one said poor Japan, a land of 40 millions against 400 millions. Poor ignorant Japan, that did not know a few years ago the difference between gold



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22. A MODEL TEAHOUSE.



and silver, that made Calcutta merchants rich by exchanging gold for silver of an equal weight. Every one considered them a nation of dolls and pretty toys, and were astonished when they found brains in their heads and courage in their hearts. Japan's hospital ships were the envy of the civilised countries, and when the war ended magnanimous Europe received her as almost an equal, adding that it was all right her beating China, but she must not be allowed to try the same thing on in Europe. She must, in fact, not be allowed to become too great a power.

Does all this, however, compensate her for what she has lost? Is the loss of art a sufficient compensation for the acquisition of wealth, or the deterioration of her morals a sufficient compromise for whatever small pleasures she may find in the degradation to which Europeans have brought her?

Civilisation has brought the lower class women of Japan down to the lowest level of the women of our own countries—stamped out every particle of purity they possessed. Is that fair? And yet for the truth of it examine any nation where civilised people have landed, be it in China, Egypt, the Colonies, or elsewhere, and the same result is seen.

People will argue that certain good always comes from the teachings of the civilised world, but is it not better to see a country retain its antiquated ideas, follow in the narrow groove of its ancestors, than to see everything that was formerly beautiful destroyed?

Wherein, then, lies the fallacy of civilisation? Surely in forcing on a nation modern trains of thought, modern ideas, and the dogmas of a modern religion—forcing it on them so suddenly that they barely comprehend the meaning, and if they do grasp what they are being taught, are apt to misunderstand it. Try and teach a child arithmetic before it has learnt its alphabet, or a schoolboy dynamics, statics, trigonometry, and higher algebra before he has studied the elementary principles of mathematics, and he learns nothing; his brain becomes fuddled simply because he is taught to read before he can spell.

The same applies to the less civilised nations. Attempts are made to teach them everything at once, their antiquated ideas are suddenly swamped with the doctrines of modern thought. We know the gradual changes that have taken place in Europe; we know how many hundreds of years of careful study it has taken to bring us to our present degree of pro-

ficiency, and yet we attempt, practically in one day, to instil into Japan what we have taken centuries ourselves to learn.

A professor who has studied all his life is too clever a man to undertake the tuition of a small boy. The child first has a governess, then a tutor or school training, and when his mind is capable of greater knowledge he can understand the teachings of philosophy. The professor probably, too, would not have sufficient patience to instruct the child. He would forget that his brain had also once been in an infantile stage, and that only by years of study had he attained his present proficiency. So also, I think, do the European nations forget that they were not always as proficient in science or civilisation in general as they are at present, and so fail to understand any nation that has antiquated ideas.

It is the same as if a person of the modern school tries to argue with those who were brought up fifty years ago. The two minds think so differently that argument becomes impossible.

For thousands of years China and Japan have studied Buddhism, and have derived comfort and happiness from the worship of their god, and yet are suddenly told to relinquish that religion and embrace the doctrines of Christianity.

In Japan the missionaries—who are usually the first introducers of civilisation—have not yet wrought as much harm as in other countries. It may be because they have not yet had time, or it may be that the Japanese are too clever and avoid them as much as they can. Missionaries are less often seen in Japan than in other Eastern countries, and especially is their absence noticed in the interior of the country or on the less frequented roads, and in villages where few Europeans have been. In those smaller places inland can still be seen the charms of the people. There they live their own lives—the happy state of farmers. Women and children till the ground or water their fields and vegetables, whilst the men carry the water in small buckets from the wells. Nature and her wonderful works exist in the interior of Japan in their uncorrupted state, uncorrupted because the fell hand of civilisation has not yet had a chance to spoil it. Go there and see the people; every man is happy; if he has a grief he feels it inwardly, but has such a control over himself as never to show it. See the hardworking labourers tilling the ground; no man is ever idle, no man "unemployed," because if work does not come readily to his hands he goes and finds it. There is enough work for every man if he only wants it, and that is where

the civilised nations of Europe differ so widely from the less civilised people of the East. There they look for it or employ themselves in some way, because every man is an artist. Every man's soul yearns for something to do, something with which he can satisfy his mind, and to be out of work becomes to him a feeling of despair. In Europe if he can get help from charitable institutions he will not work; he would sooner go round the streets amongst the bands of unemployed, and so impose on kind-hearted people, than earn a living by honest work.

The agricultural industry in most countries has fallen, and fallen to their danger. Hardly a country in Europe, with the exception probably of Russia, can live on the products of its fields. England in a few weeks could be starved out if her Colonies were prevented from feeding her. Men would sooner live an unhealthy life in some squalid, filthy part of a large town, as near as possible to a public-house, than live a healthy life as farmers or farm labourers. To till the ground is beneath them, because they have been taught to read and write. A lower class woman shuns domestic service, because she thinks she loves her liberty so much that she would sooner live in a single room, subsist on bad food, and retain her free

evenings by serving behind a shop counter or being courted by fools in a bar, than have a comfortable home and wholesome food as a servant in a private house. These are the so-called blessings of modern civilisation. Japan, which is less civilised, is a prosperous country; it thrives on its art and manufactures; it has sufficient produce to satisfy the nation and even export the surplus; and why? because civilisation has not yet had time to prey on the country to such an extent as to destroy everything. To be out of work is an expression unheard of there. If the towns are stocked with people the surplus will go into the fields and till them, or into the rice field or tea plantations, anywhere so long as they can find work to do. They have no trades unions to fix the prices of their wages, no strikes—the natural consequence—to throw men and women out of work and on the charity of others. They work, and in that work they find enjoyment and are happy.

I should be sorry to suggest that all civilisation is bad; some good is bound to be derived from it, and Japan has undoubtedly much for which to thank her civilisers. She has realised it too, and has thriven in many ways. Yet I maintain that the

methods used to effect that degree of civilisation are wrong.

People say it is selfish not to import modern knowledge and modern thought to these people. Let them import knowledge which is sound, knowledge which, from their own personal experience, they find beneficial to a nation; not knowledge of such a class as to bring the women of the country to the lowest ebb of degradation; not knowledge that will teach a country drunkenness and prostitution, or teach its people to be discontented and destroy its art and every spark of originality and individuality it possessed. Examine each step carefully, weigh the *pros* and *cons*, place on one side those acts of civilisation which have wrought benefits on the nations undergoing that treatment, and on the other side place the harm derived from it, weigh them in an impartial spirit, and see which side turns the scale. If the benefits outweigh the harm, then continue with the present system; if the converse is found to be the answer, give up civilisation and the attempts of modern missionaries to impart to a nation an unsympathetic religion, change the system and method of civilisation, or, better still, adopt the midway course.

What, after all, is civilisation? It is the sum of

the results of individual influences upon society. When these influences are beneficial to the community to which they are applied, the civilisation is progressive; when injurious, it is retrograde. Examine for a moment the state of Japan or China; in both countries for many centuries the civilisation advanced by steady steps without the aid of the outside world.

China 150 years ago was the most civilised nation in the world, but owing to the old doctrines of Confucius still being prevalent in the country, it has ceased to expand, and has remained stationary for many generations.

In Japan the people more readily conformed to our ideas, and were willing to a certain extent to entrust their advancement to European nations; but still it is a doubtful point as to whether the civilisation of that country is progressive or retrograde. In some aspects it is progressive. It has adopted much that is beneficial to its community; but the influences of civilisation have also caused the country to go backwards instead of forwards. Its morals have undoubtedly, owing to these influences, deteriorated, its art has to a great extent diminished. The habits of the people, founded on the instinct of imitation, the love of luxury promoted by wealth, and the



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23. A CHINAMAN.

restraint of liberty, which is the result of a dread of being censured by society, have all been influenced by civilisation to its deterioration. The bonds of modern conventionality are so strong at the present time that they will sooner or later produce a uniform type of character, which only the strongest and most unconventional will be able to resist.

China is too vast an empire to bear comparison. Her people have retained far more of their ancient ideas than other nations. There the native cities are walled off from the European settlements, and so the Europeans have less chance of mixing with the people and teaching them their ideas. Canton, one of the largest native cities in China, is separated from any communication with the European island of Sharmeen by means of the Canton River. A bridge connects the island with the Chinese town, and a gate bars the entrance of any white man, unless the guard permits him to pass through. Canton of to-day is almost the same as it was a hundred years ago, the same narrow streets — squalid, unhealthy, littered with filth inches deep; pools of stagnant water, patches of coagulated blood at every step, the entrails of various fowls and animals scattered over the road, present themselves at every

corner. The only difference is in the wares presented in the shop fronts—articles manufactured wholesale for the European and American markets. It is hard to realise that such a place can exist within a few yards of an island like Sharmeen, where the European consuls live and the merchants have their houses and warehouses — fine large stone houses almost alongside the most uncivilised place it is possible to conceive.

The picture I have tried to draw of a Chinese town may not appear inviting, and people will probably argue that it were better to lose individuality than allow such a place to continue to exist. The people, nevertheless, are happy: give them finer houses or cleaner streets and they are no better pleased. Attempt to reform their mode of living, and they are no more contented even if they become more cleanly, because for hundreds of years they and their forefathers have been used to such a life.

Civilisation is more influenced by religion than by anything else, because the people will attempt to live according to their religious doctrines. Nations with different religions can never have the same degrees of civilisation, because of the moral influences caused by their particular religion.

It is almost impossible to sum up the civilisation question of Japan, because we find so many conflicting testimonies. On the one hand, we have the man who spends only a few weeks in the country, and judges it merely from a globe-trotter's point of view, who has gone there with the intention of enjoyment. In nearly every case he is enraptured. On the other hand, we find that the man who is forced to make Japan his home returns to Europe slandering the people, telling his friends that she is an overrated country, and that the morals of the people are lower than in any other land—but he never says with what country he compares them. Let him walk down Piccadilly at night, or visit some of the cafés at Paris, and if his sense of morality is not more disgusted than it was in Japan he must be either blind to the outward signs of vice, or else he must force himself, against his conviction, to denounce Japan and uphold that vice in his own country.

Again, one man will argue that the Japanese are the most tender-hearted creatures in the world, who live up to the doctrines of Buddha, and kill no life to satisfy their appetite; and yet another will call them inhuman, because they eat uncooked live fish, little remembering that we eat and relish lobsters

that are put alive into boiling water, or that we eat *pâté de foie gras*, knowing the torture to which the poor bird has been subjected.

A comparison will be drawn between the massacre at Port Arthur (about which we heard so much at the time of the China and Japan war) and the humanity shown in warfare between civilised nations. The person who draws the comparison evidently forgets the massacres in Paris and Spain, where the grounds for revenge were purely of a religious nature, practised on people who refused to conform to them. In the case of Japan the cause was to avenge those who had been captured by the Chinese, and tortured by them before the stronghold was taken. Few ever mentioned that, because they wished to show up the people in the worst possible light. The Japanese received the censure of the world for that unfortunate massacre, and yet the civilised nations were applauded (by many) for massacring the Chinese in the late war, merely because they refused to change their religion—that was at the bottom of the trouble. Why should the slaughter as practised by the Japanese in that one instance be unjustifiable, and yet, because a European potentate, who poses not only as a theologian but as a Christian, tells his soldiers, previous to their em-

barkation for China, "to go in and give no quarter," why does he receive the applause of the other civilised nations? No Japanese Emperor would have addressed his troops in that way, because, being Buddhists, they live up to their doctrines, and adhere to their saying, "Don't do to others as you would not they should do to you." That is a maxim of an uncivilised nation, and one that we are trying to teach the elements of civilisation. How can they understand our methods when we do not even practise what we ourselves preach?

Nations of Europe, what is your object in civilising the Orient? What aim have you in view that you are so zealous about the civilisation of these countries in the East? Is it to increase your commercial relations, or is it the hope of acquiring new territory? Is it in search of gold, or are your objects purely philanthropic? I fear philanthropy, though it is the excuse given, plays a very small part in your machinations in the East. The missionaries of some of the nations may have that object in view—the bettering of their fellow-subjects—but the missionaries of France are merely the advance agents of the Government, agents carefully chosen to give information about the doings of the other nations

—political spies. Was the treaty between France, Russia, and Germany, in 1895, a treaty to alleviate the sufferings of China, or was it a political intrigue because they feared that Japan's possession of Port Arthur would be detrimental to their interests? Who can deny the truth of this accusation that each of those three Powers had the same fear, that if Japan remained at Port Arthur and fortified it, she would hold the key to the Far East? Russia's intention was manifest. She considered Port Arthur safer in her hands, guarded by Russian soldiers, than in the hands of Japan, whose strength she had witnessed in the China-Japan War. The Chinese, who in the Liao-tung peninsular were rejoicing that they had Japanese rule in place of the cruelties of Chinese oppression, were, owing to this Triple Alliance, to be cast back to their former state, to be at the mercy of relentless mandarins. In consequence, Russia seized Port Arthur. France, the faithful friend and ally, backed her up, though her interest was shrouded in obscurity. France joined because she felt an assurance of safety by taking the hand of her big brother, though her gain at the time was almost imperceptible. Russia bleeds her, forces her hand at every turn, and in return for a "kiss" given by the Potentate of



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24. A PLACID STREAM.

the one country to the President of the other, receives a loan of millions of francs: one seems poor security for the other. The gain to France may never come, but yet she fears a refusal might have the effect of making her an enemy of Russia. Germany, to her shame, joined her "friends"; she, too, felt it safer to have Russia as a friend than as a foe, though I will give her credit for having another deeper reason than cowardice. Germany cast longing eyes on Kiao-Chou. She saw her chance, realised that it would be useful for coaling purposes, and thought (I believe she saw she was doing a dirty trick) Russian influence would help her.

Civilised nations of Europe, are not these the objects for which you are all striving—the acquisition of wealth, greater facilities for your trade and commerce, and the ultimate annihilation of the country you desire to civilise? Japan, a new nation, who had shed her heart's blood to take the stronghold of Port Arthur, who, in the face of the jeers of Europe at her futile endeavour (so they all thought then) to beat China, unheeding their warning, continued and succeeded; Japan, the land of pigmies and dolls, who thrashed the armies of China with her 400 million inhabitants, and was told at the very height of her

triumph to relinquish the very place where so many of her bravest soldiers had laid down their lives. She appealed to England in her anguish, and the only consolation she received was the advice that it was hopeless to resist the allied nations. The advice of Russia, France, and Germany, clothed in the robe of friendship, was to leave what she had gained to her superiors, and run away and play. This deep-laid scheme was shrouded under the title of "Peace and Civilisation."

What a mockery! A dog is taught to perform tricks by the aid of a stick, and the man who puts him through his performance says it is all done by kindness: on this principle have the would-be civilisers of the world turned Japan out of what she so dearly paid for, and then say they have done it in the interest of civilisation.

If these men who fell fighting for the honour of Japan, who lost their lives out of loyalty for their country, could awake now and see Russia snugly nested in Port Arthur, and Kiao-Chou in the hands of Germans, how their souls would revolt against such injustice!

The commencement of the Boxer War in China dates from this period. The conspiracy was hatched

when the German Emperor sent Russia his Kaiserbild in 1895—an allegorical picture, called the Yellow Peril, in which he depicted the Archangel Michael, with sword in hand, exhorting his fellow-civilisers, and pointing to a flaming image of Buddha, to subdue China. Germany and Russia, in front, clasped in an embrace of friendship, England reluctant at the back (his Germanic Majesty always gave Britain credit for being reluctant to engage in a mean trick), but induced by Austria to join. That picture, executed at the hands of Knackfuss from the Emperor's design, has a smattering of mockery. Did the Kaiser foresee the murder of his Ambassador, or the rising of the Boxers? Did he divine the truth, that China would rise to protect her religion and try to drive out civilisation, or design his Kaiserbild with the intention of inducing his co-civilisers to nag at China, with the knowledge that the pin-pricks would sooner or later touch a tender spot, and that her subjugation would follow? The evidence seems to point to the last solution, that it was a deep-laid plot—a tragedy in which the first act only has been played.

So long as civilisation is carried on in the East in the way it has been, so long will those nations revolt,

until they are vanquished, or are strong enough to defeat their oppressors.

The whole question of civilisation is so closely connected with the subject of my next chapter, that it has been hard to separate it altogether from religion. It is through the medium of religion that a favourable issue is looked for, and in trying to separate the two I may have laid myself open to attack from those whose ideas differ from mine.

CHAPTER IX

MISSIONARIES AND RELIGION

THE Japanese have always been a nation who were quick at understanding, intelligent, even beyond the hopes of the civilisers, and have outstripped in many respects the very people who have been trying to change them.

The greatest harm which civilisation has produced in the Eastern countries is that caused by the missionaries of which mention has already been made. As soon as a country is discovered the missionaries are almost the first to go out to minister to the wants of the people, and the result of this interference has in nearly every case led to riot and massacre. When the Portuguese landed there in the sixteenth century, St. François Xavier, a Jesuit priest, took up his residence in the country with his followers. Whatever they failed to accomplish by fair means they effected by foul means, and then appeared astonished that the Emperor had them massacred

wholesale and closed his ports to any intercourse with Europe. It stands to reason that a country is jealous of its own religion, and refuses to embrace the religion of the first outsider who tries to teach it.

The missionary societies probably would not have sufficient funds to continue the destruction they have commenced in the East, were it not for the bands of elderly spinsters and childless parents who have so little to do and so much spare time that they spend it in listening to the flowery speeches of the missionaries, or by themselves undertaking portions of this philanthropic work. They are imposed on by these people, and leave large legacies to the societies (they seldom give during their lifetime). If it were not for these kind-hearted, much imposed-on people, missionary work would not be as lucrative as it is. Missionaries would then not be paid a salary in accordance with the size of their families—which in many cases is prodigious.

It is absolutely sickening to return home and hear those people holding meetings, expounding on the hardships they have gone through, and enumerating the good they have done and the number of converts (are they?) they have made. It is sickening to see the way they, by clever speeches, impose on their

hearers, after one has seen their methods in those countries, seen the way they are loathed by the natives. The lies they tell them in order to obtain a convert! Lies may sound a harsh word to use about a person who poses as a disciple of Christ, but the truth remains; they do prevaricate. No means are unjustifiable so long as they gain their end. The topic of missionaries and their methods is a favourite one amongst all people, and arguments can be raised on all points involving their work. It is a topic which it is almost impossible to exhaust, so much can be argued on both sides, but probably more on the wrong than on the right side. The missionaries are men as a rule who, on account of their ignorance, are deemed unqualified to minister to the religious training of their own countrymen, and so are sent out to try what they can do with heathens.

In the colonies the harm caused by these propagators of religion is not so great as in foreign countries, because a large body of Europeans settle there and carry with them modern ideas and modern systems. They themselves teach the natives what they want them to learn, or else teach them nothing, and allow them to continue in their former semi-savage state. But wherever the missionary element is strong, the

people are discontented ; and this is more felt in countries in the East where they have an old long-founded religion of their own than in countries where theology is less prominent, as amongst the Laplanders and Scandinavians. There the better type of missionary may do good, and the people do, in many cases, embrace the Christian faith and derive comfort from it.

The missionaries go to China and Japan and try to instil into those peoples a religion they do not understand. They tell them that unless they believe in the Christian God they will never be saved. They are astonished that the people rebel, that they refuse to believe and to give up their own sacred worship of Buddha, the god they have looked to for comfort and loved for thousands of years.

What have the missionaries done for China ? They have caused the natives to rebel, they have been the means of forcing a war upon her, and one that they consider justifiable because of its religious aspect.

The civilised world, at the same time as it sent out missionaries to China, built railways from the Treaty Ports inland to facilitate the transport of merchandise, and by that means placed thousands of Boxers, whose duty it was to carry the goods inland,

out of work. The civilised world has sent out missionaries, mostly narrow-minded, brainless fools, who go out with a Bible under one arm and the hope of lucrative remuneration under the other, to these countries to literally force our religion on the nation and then are surprised because that nation rises. They send armies there to subdue them, to subdue a nation that is merely fighting to retain its own sacred religion. Let the civilised countries reorganise their missionary societies and send out doctors and men with brains who are capable of teaching the people to think as we do, to see things in the same light as we do, and then probably that nation will, when civilised to our standpoint, see things from our point of view; then let the Churchmen go out and attempt to teach them the religion of Christ and the doctrines of Christianity.

In Japan the result is the same, though the climax has not been reached—the sword has not been drawn. The Japanese have not yet been pressed to desperation, nor thought it feasible to attack the Embassies in Tokyo as the Chinese did in Pekin, which was the cause of the outbreak of the war with China. They are too clever for that. They hear with their ears and agree in words with what the mission-

aries tell them, but directly the missionaries' backs are turned they enter one of their temples and pray to their own God. The missionaries imagine they have made a convert, and the next time they meet him he will agree with them, only, however, to laugh at them when they have gone. There are exceptions of course, and I should be sorry to suggest that some few *bonâ fide* converts are not to be found, or that some missionaries do not go out to these countries in the right spirit, but in both cases they are few and far between.

The following story, though it does not illustrate the works of Japanese missionaries, is indicative of their methods, and will explain how incomprehensible their teachings are to the Buddhists. I was at a small island called Macao, close to Hongkong and a Portuguese settlement, and walking along the main street met a Roman Catholic procession proceeding down the road. At the rear of the procession I was surprised to see about fifty Chinamen in surplices carrying candles and swinging incense, and asked the meaning of it from a Chinese chemist who was standing before his shop, and whether they were *bonâ fide* believers. My informant told me that they were only nominally converts, because they found out that unless they were baptized and



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25. A LODESTONE.



conformed to the wishes of the Roman Catholic community, they had little chance of selling their goods. The priests informed them that unless they became converts no Catholics would ever come to their shops. To use my informant's own words, he said, "No believe, no can get pidgin," which is their term for business. The whole procession was to those men a mockery; probably that same evening they entered one of their own temples and asked forgiveness of Buddha for forsaking him.

The Buddhists worship idols, and are told by the missionaries that they sin and are read the Third Commandment, and still they see, drawn through the streets, effigies of Christ and the Virgin Mary, priests in magnificent vestments standing under canopies richly hung with lace and strings of jewels, and preceded by other priests bearing candles and swinging incense. How can these people possibly understand the difference between the worship of a graven image like Buddha, and their other gods and demigods, and these effigies of Christ and the Virgin Mary, when they see the people bowing to them and crossing themselves? How can they comprehend the meaning of this outward show when they are not permitted by the missionaries to indulge in it in their own religion?

One of the chief reasons why the missionaries have been so unsuccessful is because they do not all belong to one sect. Though the religion of all is the same—Christian—it is divided into Roman Catholic, Greek-Orthodox, and Protestant, which is again subdivided into numerous denominations. All these various sects—though they embrace the same faith—are rivals to each other. How, then, can these so-called heathens believe when each of the different missionaries puts forward his denomination as the only true one? After all, as Mr. Brownell in his book on Japan points out, the Buddhists are Buddhists for precisely the same reason that we are Christians—because their forefathers were so before them. The Japanese ask why the missionaries do not study Buddhism first, as their officials study Christianity, before going abroad. The missionaries do not understand the people, and yet expect them to comprehend the doctrines of a different religion. Ask a Buddhist why he does not become a Christian, and he will ask which denomination he is to believe in. In Japan the missionaries are tolerated, in China they are hated, and unless they try to study the people, learn their religion and the language, they can never hope to convert them.

Every one knows that to a Chinaman his pigtail is

something sacred; if he has it cut off he can never return to his country, and yet I have seen missionaries in Shanghai and other cities, fair-haired men, with long pigtails attached. They profane a Chinaman's most sacred possession, and still expect him to believe them. Their only excuse for donning this fancy dress is that the Chinese will more readily listen to them when they have a pigtail than when they are devoid of one. I have passed down streets in Shanghai and heard Chinamen curse these missionaries, as only a Chinaman can, as if they were dogs. The very sight of them is to the natives poison, and when they retaliate, to defend their god, by slaughtering a few of them, armies are sent over from Europe to fight them and subdue them. Suppose a band of Buddhist priests were to land in London and go amongst the poorer classes in the East End. The whole city would be in arms against them at once if they attempted to preach their religion to us, and yet what knowledge have we except the belief in the faith and teachings of our forefathers that our religion is the only true one? The Buddhists believe in their own religion, but do not try and force it down the throats of others.

The missionaries, instead of trying to introduce their religion first amongst the richer people, the nobles

and those in authority, at once start on the mob, the riffraff of the country, men who are absolutely uneducated, though history has told us the futility of such a proceeding. When Buddhism was first introduced into Japan, *viâ* Korea, the missionaries started by trying to convert the Emperor. The priests brought over an image of Buddha as a present to the Emperor Kimmei from the Korean King. When it was first introduced into China from India it was unsuccessful. The second time the Emperor of China, about A.D. 50, sent to India to inquire into the powers of Buddha, and when the messengers returned accompanied by Buddhist priests the sovereign accepted the faith, and after him his advisers, until the whole nation embraced the same religion.

Every nation has a faith—a religion. The one may be finer and more in consistence with our ideas than another, but why not try to teach those nations the principles of living a Christian life first? The word Christian may and does now mean more than a belief in Christ. It is used in a general sense in which a Jew or a Buddhist can be a good Christian. It means also acting up to the teachings of Christ, walking in His footsteps, leading the life He led, doing good, relieving the sufferings of the poor, heal-

ing the sick; and all these examples of what we term Christianity are practised also, though possibly not to the same extent, by nations we call heathens.

If the missionaries were to leave out the word religion from their teachings they would find their work much easier. If they first assisted the people to lead better lives, taught the Chinese cleanlier habits, showed them how to work so as to make their labour more productive, their converts would be more numerous and themselves more tolerated. It is merely by trying to teach them something they do not understand that they become rebellious, but by slow degrees, without the aid of religion, the missionaries—provided the right men go out there—will be able to accomplish great things, and when the time is ripe, and the people understand us and our methods, the missionaries will be able to teach them our religion.

Every nation has had a faith of its own at one period of its history, and in almost every case when the missionaries have gone out to that country to teach them Christianity the result has been a massacre; nowadays the missionaries are the first to be killed, formerly in the time of the Crusaders the heathens were the slaughtered ones. One cannot help admiring the missionaries for this unending perseverance. They

visit these countries with the certain knowledge that any day may be their last. It is interesting to examine for a moment the history of Christianity in other countries. Take, for example, the Incas of Peru or the Aztecs of Mexico, who both worshipped what they saw, the sun; they knew no other god, but feeling the benefit of the sun's rays, and observing how under the influence of the sun the flowers grew and the crops flourished, they fell down and worshipped the sun. What was the result of the Spanish invasions under Pizarro and Cortes—men who went out professing to carry the banner of Christ—subjects of the greatest Christian kingdom in the world? A wholesale massacre, bloodshed such as has never before or since been known, cavalry and sword against a defenceless nation, a Christian people against unarmed farmers and heathens, plunder right and left; and why? to propagate the gospel was the answer. Is that Christian? and yet people say, "Oh, that was when Europe was less civilised." Europe was as much civilised then as China is now, but simply because the tables are turned, and the missionaries, instead of the heathens, are the first to be killed, a war is justifiable.

In Shanghai I was told of a missionary up-country

who had made a few converts, and who wrote to his society at home asking for further funds to build a church. Money was forthcoming and sent out, and he wrote back saying he had built a church, and that with the few remaining bricks he had built himself a humble dwelling. The truth was that the church turned out to be a wooden barn, a mere apology for a church, a sort of cowshed, and the humble dwelling was a palatial stone residence. Statistics show that it costs nearly £1000 to convert a Chinaman, and then people say it is cheap at the price. In Japan, no doubt, the figure can be put very much lower, but then the Japanese are a nation who will more readily conform to anything new. They delight in novelty. They are anxious to learn anything which they imagine will benefit them, but at present say they are so busy learning all the other European methods that they have no time to turn their attention to religion. The Japanese have never been a nation as wrapt up in their religions as China has been, and so do not feel to the same degree the shame of laying it aside, but that does not mean that they will as readily embrace another, and the consequence is that in Japan thousands of people to-day have no belief at all beyond the belief of an agnostic. In Europe the same state is becoming

every year more prominent. People of Europe as they become more civilised think more, and as a natural consequence take things less for granted. They think out the religion of their forefathers, and seeing some fallacies they cannot explain away, become what is now termed agnostics. The same state of things has taken place in Japan, where, prior to the civilisation of the country, they were either Shintoists or Buddhists, the religion of their forefathers. They now have become agnostics owing entirely to their not liking to embrace a new faith about which they understand so little.

Ask a Japanese whether he is a Shintoist or a Buddhist, and he will look at you in blank amazement; he has not got a notion to which he belongs; all he knows is that after his birth he was presented at a Shinto temple, and that on his death he will be buried by a Buddhist priest. Beyond that knowledge he cares very little to which religion he belongs, or even whether he belongs to any at all. In neither religion are the priests bound by any vows of celibacy, and their wives become priestesses; but their duties do not embrace any religious teaching, they merely perform the more arduous task of dancing, singing, and going through pantomimic tricks to please the



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26. AN AVENUE OF TORII.

gods. The greatest religious law of the Buddhists is to learn the duties they owe to their parents and ancestors. Whilst their parents are alive they owe them everything; and when dead they go on appointed days to their graves, pray to them, and take gifts of food in the same way as the ancient Egyptians used to place urns with spices and food in the tombs of their kings. The idea apparently is that the soul is more than something spiritual, and requires sustenance. When the missionaries see these Chinamen praying to or for the souls of their ancestors, they think it is a form of worship, and remonstrate with them about it, whereas it is no more than a prayer to their particular god of the dead to receive the soul of the departed.

In Japan the filial piety takes rather a different form. They do not, as in China, visit the graves of their dead to the same extent; but during the lives of their parents no hardship is too great for them to bear if they can alleviate in any way the burdens of their parents.

In conjunction with this filial piety, and to show the length to which it is carried, the Yoshiwara in Tokyo is worth mentioning, and similar institutions throughout the country. A woman will sell herself

into vice to save her parents from debt or disgrace. She does so perhaps merely for a few pounds. She sells herself to some one who keeps a house in the Yoshiwara, and they pay the parents the necessary amount. When it has been worked off, the daughter returns to her home—not, as in Europe, a person to be shunned by her friends, but a respectable member of society again, who has offered her body to pay her parents' debts. Girls of the best families in Japan, as well as of the worst, go to these places, and nothing is thought of it.

More fuss and scandal has been caused about these places by missionaries and Europeans than about anything else in the country, and why? Because the missionaries look upon it from the point of view of gross immorality, whilst the Japanese do not consider the slavery to which they subject their daughters from the moral standpoint at all. Morality is, after all, a wide term, and differs in every country.

If the missionaries were to investigate the morality in their own countries a little more; if they were to attend to the East End of London—where there is plenty of work for all the missionaries if they want to look for it—or see that the women of their own countries received the proper supervision as they do

in Japan, instead of going to those countries, where, in the place of reducing immorality they increase it, by pointing out the difference between the two; if they, in fact, were to leave every nation to guard her own morals, they might be more popular, and would certainly do much more good. There is probably no country in the world where the morals of the people were higher than in Japan before the missionaries and European lay people went there; and now, after perhaps only twenty years of real civilisation, the country has become spoilt. The reputation of the women has become known to the world, and through no fault of their own.

I fear that I have said much on this subject that will call forth a shower of abuse, and it may be that my remarks deserve the criticism they may get; but these are my convictions, and have not been written with the intention of hurting the feelings of any person. I must borrow the words of the author of the "Letters of John Chinaman," and say that if I have offended I am sorry; but if it is the truth that offends, then I can offer and make no apology.

So little do the Japanese trouble about religion that to this day, after a period of nearly five hundred years, their Buddhist prayers are still written in Chinese

characters; they have never even taken the trouble to have them transcribed. The oldest form of religion in Japan is Shinto, which is a mixture of nature and ancestor worship. It has thousands of gods and goddesses of the wind, sea, rivers, trees, and mountains, which are again subdivided into gods of certain rivers, trees, and mountains—and the whole bundle are called the *Kami*. The chief is the sun goddess, Ama-terasu, who was born from the left eye of Izanagi whilst he was washing himself in a stream. The moon god, according to the ancient legend, came from his right eye; and the god Susa-no-o, the storm god, was born from his nose. From every article of clothing that Izanagi took off a deity was said to have sprung. Ama-terasu is said to be the ancestress from whom all the Emperors of Japan have been descended. Her shrine is at Ise: and she is, in consequence of having given birth to the royal line of the Mikados, honoured above all the rest.

The Shinto religion has no written dogmas or moral code, and the people originally used to pay homage to the gods for much the same reason that they worship the Mikado—merely because they were taught that obedience to both was expected of them. If a man did wrong his sins were forgiven if he only

purified himself in water. They had no idea of an after world, although the continued existence of the dead was to some extent believed in. After the introduction of Buddhism the Shinto religion became amalgamated with the Buddhist religion—the priests received the Shinto gods as ancestors of the Buddhas; and so, although Buddhism became the prominent religion, Shintoism was still practised at Court, and the rituals were put into writing.

The Shinto temples are simplicity itself in comparison to those dedicated to Buddha, consisting merely of plain wooden buildings devoid of carving or gold lacquer work. The furniture of a Shinto temple consists of a mirror, which is placed in a conspicuous position, and beyond that hardly anything is seen. In another chamber the sword and jewel are kept, and in former years the virgin daughter of the Mikado was left in the Temple of Ise to watch over these relics, supposed to have been left him by Amaterasu. The mirror is considered the emblem of purity, and no idol of any kind is visible within the sacred shrine. In front of every Shinto temple stands the *torii*, sometimes of wood, stone, or bronze; and this was the sign by which to distinguish the Shinto from the Buddhist temples. The *torii* is

priests into Shinto temples, who brought with them much of the ornamental carving, and practised many of the Buddhist ceremonies. Some people go so far as to declare that the Shinto religion is too mean, fabulous, and contemptible to be worthy even of mention. It is interesting to read Will Adams's views on the religion of Japan recorded in one of his letters, and written in 1614. He writes: "The peopell in thear relligion are veri zellous, or svperstitious, hauing diuers secttes, but praying all them secttes, or the most part, to on saynt, which they call Ameeda, which they esteem to bee their mediator between God and them: all these secttes liuing in friendship on with an other, but everi on as his conscience teacheth. In this land are manny Christians according to ye Romische order. In the year 1612 is put downe all the secttes of the Franciscannes. The Jesouets hau what priuiledge theare beinge in Nangasaki, in which place only may be so many as will of all secttes: in other places not manny permitted."

Buddhism was first introduced into Japan from Korea, ambassadors being sent from there with a gold image of Buddha and some written pamphlets as a present to the Emperor Kimmei. This was about A.D. 500. The Emperor was impressed by the



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27. A TEMPLE AT NIKKŌ.



words of the ambassadors, and decided to give the new religion a chance, though his advisers, who feared offending the Kami, were much against it. The only person who favoured this new God, besides the Emperor, was Soga-no-Iname, the Mikado's prime minister, and so the image was deposited in that worthy person's garden, and his house transformed into the first Buddhist temple. Misfortune happened in the form of a pestilence, and of course Buddha had to bear the blame. The Emperor's advisers, other than Soga-no-Iname, attributed the outbreak of this fever to the Golden Image, and it was promptly consigned to a watery grave, and the temple, the minister's country seat, devastated. The Korean missionaries, after they saw that worse calamities befell Japan, came over again with the excuse that they were due to the profanity with which Buddha had been treated; so that the Mikado repented his act, had the temple rebuilt, and the Golden Image reinstated. From that day Buddhism was received with favour.

When Buddhism arrived in Japan, it was already split up into numbers of sects. Originating in India, it had travelled through Ceylon into China, where it had a hundred years in which to be broken up. The

chief aim of the Buddhists seems to be a striving after Nirvâna, in which the thinking principle, after numerous transmigrations, is saved from the evils of existence. The personal name of Buddha is Siddhartha, who was the son of Gautama, King of Kapilavastu. At an early age he wandered for seven years in the Himalaya wilderness, denying himself everything, living the life of an anchorite, and continually in search of the truth.

According to the Buddhistic legend, a woman, who after many years of married life eventually gave birth to a child, and meeting Siddhartha footsore and weary from his travels and famished from want of food, realised that he was some god through whose power she had been enabled to give birth to her offspring, and presented him with a bowl of milk. That night the Truth was revealed to him whilst he was sitting beneath a tree. The growth of Buddhism and downfall of Brahminism was then only a matter of time. Thousands flocked to him, and were told the way to live. The kings joined his fold; and Buddha, journeying from place to place, spread the doctrines of this new faith.

In Japan Buddhism remained unacknowledged amongst the mass for about fifty years. About thirty

years after its introduction, Soga-no-Iname, the minister who had first embraced it, built a pagoda; but it is due to Shotoku Taishi, the Prince Regent after the death of the Emperor Kimmei, that Buddhism became almost an established religion. He built many temples all over the country, and some of the most celebrated ones. Though many sects of Buddhism were introduced into Japan, many others have sprung up since; but the new ones never entirely superseded the old, and consequently the Tendai and Shingon sects still survive. Though the sects may differ as regards worship, forms of ritual, and temple decorations, the doctrine of Nirvâna remains the same in all, and is the height to which all Buddhists aspire.

Sir Ernest Satow, whose word on that religion can, from his profound study of the subject, be taken as authentic, says: "The entirety of doctrine, however, results in one central truth, namely, that Nirvâna is the final result of existence, a state in which the thinking substance, while remaining individual, is unaffected by anything external, and is consequently devoid of feeling, thought, or passion. To this the name of Mu-i is given, signifying absolute, unconditional existence. When this is spoken of as annihilation, it is annihilation of conditions, not of the substance,

that is meant. Pushed to its logical result, this would appear to the ignorant to amount to the same thing as non-existence; but here we are encountered by one of those mysteries which lie at the foundation of all religious belief, and which must be accepted without questioning, if there is to be any spiritual religion at all."

The question still remains unanswered: Will the Japanese ever embrace Christianity? Much depends on those teachers of religion who visit the country. If they start in the right quarter and abide their time, the answer is probably Yes; but if they continue as they have begun, no satisfactory result will ever be attained. Mr. Arthur Diósy, in his "New Far East," has prophesied a great future for Japan, and maintains that some time soon she will embrace the Christian religion, but goes on to say that she will invent a form of her own. After he has asked the question as to whether the nation will profess Christianity, he goes on to say: "Not yours, dear reader, whatever sect or denomination you may belong to. . . . The Japanese will never enter the fold of a religion whose pontiff is enthroned in Rome. Bishop Nikoloï . . . will never induce the majority of the Japanese to adopt a creed whose Supreme Head on

earth is the Tsar. . . . Nor will the Japanese enter in union with a Church whose chief Primate's See is at Canterbury. . . . The Japanese will, in time, profess Christianity, but it will be Christianity of a Japanese pattern." Should any missionary ever deem this book worth reading, I hope he will treat me leniently in his scathing criticism. I am ready, and even willing to bear it, if the result has any effect upon the future workings of his society.

CHAPTER X

THE TEMPLES AND THEIR GODS

"Nikko wo minas uchi wa,
'Kepko' to ni na!"

THIS is the Japanese proverb exhorting people not to use the word magnificent until they have seen Nikkō. It is the centre of Buddhist and Shinto worship, temples one mass of gold and carving, a river, the Daiya-gawa, flowing from the hills beyond Yumoto, through Lake Chuzengi, and thence through the sacred town of Nikkō. The town, with its hotels, quaint houses, and picturesque people, occupies the land on one side of the river, whilst the other is devoted to the temples. Nikkō is the home of the gods, the resting-place of saints of days gone by, its river crossed by the sacred red bridge across which none are permitted to pass. Blood-red the bridge stands shining in the sun, its polished wood studded with gold, torrents of water rushing beneath it, foam lashing against the dark red wood. Below, a green bridge over which the people pass;



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28. THE SACRED BRIDGE.

in the distance, towering above the temples, a pagoda, five-storied, emblazoned with gold and red, its lower storey carved with figures representing the twelve divisions of the Zodiac or Ecliptic, namely, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces. Beneath it a stone *torii*, before the gateway of Yomeimon leading to the temple of Yakushi; in the distance the tomb of Ieyasu. There are avenues of cryptomerias on either side of the road leading to the temples, each tree rising straight towards the sky.

The legend of the sacred red bridge is that Shōdō Shōnin, a saint who built the first Buddhist temple at Nikkō, whilst on a pilgrimage, reached the river Daiya-gawa and found it impassable; so he prayed to Buddha for help, when a divine figure appeared suddenly on the opposite bank, dressed in blue and black robes, who, seeing his trouble, offered to help him, and threw two green and blue snakes across the river. Instantly a long bridge sprang up, over which Shōdō Shōnin crossed; but directly he gained the other side both the god and the bridge disappeared. The bridge was originally built in 1638, and has gates at each end, through which none but the Mikado himself is allowed to pass.

Crossing the ordinary bridge the temples stand out in all their glory, one mass of colouring, rich with gold. An avenue of cryptomerias indicates the direction to be taken, the dark leaves of these colossal trees blending beautifully with the rich colouring of the temples; and there in front, beyond the stone *torii*, stands the temple of Yakushi with its wonderful gate. This gate is painted white and gold. On either side are long carved panels—on the left, birds; on the right, flowers. The birds and flowers are cut so deep that they appear to stand out from the background, which is red lacquer, and are painted in their correct colours. On either side of the gate, in recesses, are two huge tigers, whose markings are the natural grain of the wood. In the courtyard before the gate are numbers of stone lanterns, in which lights are placed on high festivals. The interior of the temple is one mass of gold, the floor spotlessly white. A dim religious light pervades the whole, scantily illuminating the carvings and gold lacquer work, part of which is kept covered, so that the action of light should not cause it to fade. In front of the altar a few persons sit praying, whilst priests squat in front of them, chanting their liturgies and beating on wooden drums. The magni-

ficence of these temples is beyond conception, rich, and still harmonious in its colouring. Outside, are wonderful avenues of cryptomerias, with their olive green leaves and almost black bark. Nikkō itself is a temple town, but beyond this it affords a charm of scenery unsurpassed in any other portion of the country. The only pity about Japanese temples is that they are nearly all alike; some may differ in the number of deities worshipped or in the outward structure of the temples, but beyond a few minor differences they are all the same.

One of the most picturesque temples in Japan is at Miyajima, on the inland sea. Its grandeur cannot be compared with any of the Nikkō or Kioto temples, but it is the absolute lack of colour which makes it so fascinating. The *torii* is built out into the sea, and the temple itself on piles, so that at high tide the whole looks as if it were a floating mass. It cannot be approached except from the back when the tide is up, and the interior is devoid of any signs of magnificence. A few very old pictures by celebrated ancient artists, and some modern daubs depicting scenes from the China war, are about all that can be seen inside the temple. Any deficiencies, however, in the interior are fully

compensated for by the perfection of the exterior. There are ten smaller and larger temples together, facing the sea. Behind, the hills of the island rise, a thickly wooded mass of vegetation, abounding in various kinds of animals, which, on account of the island being sacred, may never be killed. On either side of the temple stand rows of stone lanterns which, when lit, reflect their light in the sea, the temple itself mirrored in the water as clear as if the sea were a looking-glass. In the distance a few picturesque houses with tame deer wandering round, or coming to be fed; others cooling themselves in the water. The absolute stillness of the island on the calm spring evening when I was there, together with the novelty of a floating temple, illuminated and reflected in the sea, the deer, unheeding any person who passed them, forced one to think whether all this could be real or whether it was only a dream. It is real, and the most wonderful sight imaginable. It is a wonder beyond conception, because of the lack of usual gold and highly perfected carving, which is so characteristic of most of the Japanese temples. Its great charm lies in the simplicity of its construction.

The gods of Japan are so numerous that it is

hard to know where to begin, and harder still where to end. Out of about a million deities, all more or less important, it is almost impossible to give an adequate description by choosing a few.

The greatest of all is the Shinto goddess Amaterasu. Sprung from the left eye of Izanagi, from whom Japan is supposed to have originated, she is said to have given birth to the first Mikado. The Sun goddess after a quarrel with her brother the Storm god, retired into a cave and plunged the world into total darkness until she was enticed forth again. So sacred is she held, that one of her images at Ise may only be seen by the Mikado and some of the highest priests in the land. This image, enveloped in a sack, was formerly the sacred charge of the virgin daughter of the Emperor. It was once seen by a high official, but one who had no right to enter the sacred precincts where it was kept, and who, in consequence of his sacrilege, was stabbed by a young Tokyo gentleman. The murderer became a saint, but the high official who had so wrongfully entered the sacred chamber was soon forgotten. The Sun goddess has her chief shrine at Ise in the province of Shima, and her image is kept in a box of chamæcyparis wood, whilst

the mirror, the emblem of Shintoism, is preserved in a silk bag. When this bag becomes old it is not removed and another substituted, but a new one is stitched over the old one. The legend says that Ama-terasu, when she plunged the earth in darkness by hiding in the cave, caught an image of her beauty in a mirror which her enticers held before her, and being enraptured at the sight of her own face, came out again.

The Temple of Ise is extremely plain in architecture, and an example of the pure Shinto type of building. Plain white wood unadorned with carving and paint.

Amida is the next god to attract one. Seated with his hands clasped and lying in his lap, he looks supremely pensive, with a smile on his lips. In the centre of his forehead he has a spot showing where wisdom lies. His feet are crossed, the soles turned up, and the whole figure surrounded by a halo of gold.

At Kamakura stands an image of this deity called the Daibutsu, or Great Buddha, the finest work of art in Japan. It is made entirely of bronze, hollowed out so that one can go inside. It is fifty feet high and proportionately broad, and the eyes



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29. THE DAIBUTSU.

are pure gold. The peaceful expression on the face is wonderful. At first sight it is difficult to take in the whole, it is too overpowering, and like the Sphinx in Egypt should be seen time after time in order to get the correct impression. Professor Chamberlain writes of this statue: "The impression it produces grows on the beholder each time that he gazes afresh at the calm, intellectual, passionless face, which seems to concentrate in itself the whole philosophy of the Buddhist religion—the triumph of mind over sense, of eternity over fleeting time, of the enduring majesty of Nirvâna over the trivial prattle, the transitory agitations of mundane existence." That idea of calm is symbolical of the Buddhist theory—that in order to attain the height after which every Buddhist strives, passions must be foregone, pleasures relinquished, and life itself must be shrouded in a veil of purity.

Amida is called "The Boundless Light," and as such has a halo (*funa-gokō*) encompassing in many cases the whole body, symbolising his widespread radiance.

The children's playmate, Hotei—one of the seven Gods of Luck distinguished by his look of contentment—a fat, plump, jolly god, with crossed legs and hands, is sufficient to inspire any child with trust.

His pleased look and bright shining eyes make the children believe him to be a suitable companion to join them in their romps. Close to him sits Kishi Bojin, the goddess who guards the young boys and girls. Children bring toys and dolls with which they adorn their protectress. Originally she was a sworn enemy of children, and used to devour (in theory) any that came in her vicinity, until she was converted by Buddha, and became their best friend. She represents "beauty" with a child in her lap, and mothers who have been deprived of their babies and women who have no offspring, come to her for comfort. They tie baby bibs and clothes round her neck and worship her as the mediator between the god who deprives children of life and the giver of breath. In her hand she holds a pomegranate, which is also her crest.

An amusing deity is Kōshin of Chinese origin, who in Japanese is called Sam biki-zaru—the three monkeys. These three represent the deaf, dumb, and blind, and are called Kika-zaru, Iwa-zaru, and Mi-zaru respectively. The idea is that they have eyes but see not, ears but hear not, and mouths but speak not evil. You can say anything and still remain assured that Kōshin or Sam biki-zaru will not allow it to go any further. Kōshin

is no scandalmonger or tell-tale, and for that reason as popular as any deity in Japan. The figures of the monkeys sit, the one covering his eyes with his hands, the second shutting his ears, and the third with his hands closely pressed over his mouth.

One hears so much about the superstition of Buddhists that I should like to justify that religion by drawing what appears to me a parallel between Buddhism and Christianity as practised by Roman Catholics. The Japanese have a god they call Binzuru, the Healer of the Sick. His image is usually placed outside the temples, because one day when some ladies were passing him, he unfortunately remarked upon their beauty in the hearing of some of his fellow deities and was reported to Buddha. On this account he was made to sit outside the chancel, but Buddha gave him the power to heal the sick and infirm as a recompense for this disadvantage. Binzuru is one of the most popular deities, especially amongst the lower classes, who adorn his body with all manner of garments, and put mittens on his hands to keep them warm. Poor Binzuru! now little is left of him owing to the rain to which he has been subjected for so many years; his arms and face are worn away. If a man has a broken thigh or sore head, he approaches Binzuru,

and after running his hand over that deity's thigh or head, applies it straight to his own, and so is cured, or at any rate believes he is. How does this form of superstition differ from that practised at Lourdes, or the walking up the Santa Scala at Rome? Thousands of pilgrims go to Lourdes to be healed, and as many climb the holy stairs at Rome in the firm belief that they will be cured if such is the divine will. Thousands of Buddhists rub Binzuru every year, and also believe their ailments are cured. I have seen infirm men with bent back approach that deity and walk away straight again—a proof of what an effective medicine imagination is; and yet I have heard Roman Catholics pity them for their childlike superstition. Surely Binzuru is as effective a cure to them as a pilgrimage to Lourdes is to the Roman Catholics? I quote the words of Major Knollys, R.A., when he describes Japan in his "Sketches of Life" as being "nearly all enslaved in childish superstition or debased by senseless scepticism." Later he goes on to say that the Buddhists "in nineteen cases out of twenty are rascally, hypocritical, with a tinge of craven superstition." And again, that they are "driven by stress of suffering to seek relief even from an obscene Buddha." What must the Japanese think of Christianity when they

read how their gods and religion are profaned by Christians themselves?

Binzuru has a great rival in popularity, Jizō, who is Compassion. He is the helper of all who are in trouble, not necessarily with bodily ailments, but also the comforter of those who are in sorrow. He is not unlike Amida, except that he has his head shaved, and holds in one hand the jewel and in the other a staff with six metal rings—*shakujō*. In the centre of his forehead he has the same spot as "The Boundless Light." His lap is often filled with small pebbles, the legend being that children when they die are seized by Shōzuka-no-Baba, an old woman who lives on the banks of the Styx, and after being divested of their clothes, are made to pile up stones on the banks of the Sai no Kawara, a river on the opposite side of the Styx, until Jizō comes to help them. So, children and mothers deposit stones in his lap when they pass him to relieve the dead souls of the children, the idea being that each stone deposited will relieve a child at Sai no Kawara of part of his toil.

Another god greatly to be pitied is Daruma, who sat for nine years in contemplation until his legs dropped off. Legend says that once he got so tired that he went to sleep, and when he awoke was so

annoyed that he cut off his eyelids, because they had closed, and flung them to the ground. There they took root, and produced plants, the leaves of which he picked, and after placing them in water, drank the beverage and never went to sleep again. This plant is supposed to be the tea shrub according to this legend.

Fudō and Emma-ō are enough to terrify even the bravest. The former, seated on a throne surrounded by flames of fire, carries in his right hand a sword to terrify sinners, and in his left hand he holds a coil of rope with which to make the wrong-doers prisoners. He is called the God of Wisdom, though he resembles far more a God of Fire. His companion, Emma-ō, is equally terrible to look at. He is regent of the Buddhist Hades, who judges the dead when they visit his region, and is attended by two scribes with paint-brush and parchment; the one takes down a record of every soul that comes before him, whilst the other reads out their offences. Emma-ō judges them according to their deserts. He carries a sword in his right hand, and his left is raised demanding silence, whilst on his head he wears a peculiar crown.

The weirdest to look at are the seven Gods of Luck, "Shichi Fukujin," who are Ebisu, the patron of labour, whose image adorns the bottles of one brand of Japanese

beer; Daikoku, the God of Wealth, who is always seated surrounded by bales of rice; Benten, a lady who plays the *samisen*, but sometimes is represented riding on a snake or dragon. Fukurokuju has an extraordinarily long head and beard, and a hat like a sou'wester on his head, and his left arm encircles the neck of a crane with a red breast. Bishamon, who is in China one of the Gods of Wealth, is depicted with a spear in his left hand, and clad in armour ready to go out to battle, and in his right hand he holds a pagoda. Jurōkujin sits holding a shepherd's crook in one hand, whilst the other rests on the head of a stag. He, like Fukurokuju, also has a long beard, and cap like the parapet of a castle. Last comes the jovial Hotei, who, to look at, is amusing, though not beautiful. He is so fat that he is propped up by a large sack at his back, and in his right hand he holds a fan with which to cool himself in hot weather. He is lightly clad, to say the least of it, and beyond a cloth loosely cast over his shoulders, finds his flesh sufficient to keep him warm.

Of all the gods of the Buddhists and Shintoists, none have so many various forms as the Goddess of Mercy, Kwannon by name. Sometimes she has four heads and eight arms, and each hand carries something

different. Other images represent her with the head of an animal, or with one thousand arms and hands, each holding out a different emblem of mercy, some herb or flower, a knife for surgical operations or balsam for healing wounds. Her two hands, which are folded in her lap, hold the jar of the mendicant priest. Kwannon is the owner of the Nyo-i-rin, the gem which is supposed to give the possessor of it everything he desires, and she has twenty-eight followers, Ni-jū-hachi Bushū, to wait upon her, who are the personification of the twenty-eight Japanese constellations. For each of her forms she has a different name, thus when she has one thousand hands she is called Sen-ju Kwannon; when she holds the gem she is known as Nyo-i-rin Kwannon; when she is depicted with four faces and eight hands she receives the name of Ba-tō Kwannon, Horse-headed Kwannon.

Every god in Japan has a particular meaning, and though the temples have sometimes many hundreds in each, they have all a significance to those who worship them. To the Japanese the belief in the healing powers of Binzuru, or the comfort they receive in the worship of Kwannon, is no superstition any more than is the Roman Catholic belief in a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Religious superstition and faith are



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30. A TEMPLE AND ITS TORII.





one and the same thing, and according to the different beliefs, greater or less. It seems unfair to deride the Buddhist superstition merely because it is incomprehensible to a broader-minded person, or to one who has no superstitious belief, and yet Christians will pity if they do not mock at such scepticism.

The Buddhist temples are far more extravagantly adorned than the churches of any other religious sect in the world. Thousands of pounds have been spent, and are spent every year, upon the re-decoration of their places of worship. Temples which were built at the beginning of the epoch of Buddhism still exist, their magnificence has been added to year by year, and so they have attained their present artistic perfection. The adornment of the temples was the first important step made by the Japanese in art. Priests from China and Korea came over to teach them the first rudiments of painting and carving, and the first people to indulge in the art, which has now become world-renowned, were the priests, who by trying to propitiate their deities, built temples sacred to them, moulded images, and adorned shrines, no tawdry imitation gold, but shrines as brilliant now as when they were lacquered hundreds of years ago. One is forced to ask how these temples, insecurely built of wood, have been

able to withstand the elements for many years, or how they have succeeded in resisting the hundreds of earthquakes which take place all over the country every year? The answer the Japanese make is by pointing to the cryptomerias which surround the temples like so many sentinels. These trees are the guardian angels of their temples. The winds cannot penetrate through the thickness of their foliage, and for that reason they are preserved. Being so lightly constructed they can also better withstand a severe earthquake, because, offering less resistance, they can shake more easily and with less risk of destruction than if they were built of solid masonry. Whether these answers are correct is matter of conjecture. It is, however, a fact that they do withstand wind, rain, and earthquakes far better than the ordinary Japanese house which is more exposed.

CHAPTER XI

"SAYŌNARA"

CHANGES take place at all times and in all countries; some are beneficial, others detrimental to the people amongst whom they are instituted. In fairness to all changes, one must acknowledge the good whilst minimising as much as possible the evil derived. Farewell to Japan, a country whose people are the delight of almost all with whom it is their fortune to come in contact: a nation of good manners and scrupulous cleanliness.

Once whilst riding in a rickisha at Yokohama I had the misfortune to be run down by a hand-cart, my rickisha was overturned, my coolie lay grovelling in the road, his carriage shafts smashed, whilst the offending carman was uninjured. My coolie, in the heat of the moment, commenced upbraiding the aggressor, who, to my astonishment, stood meekly silent when I expected retaliation, because if one was guilty of negligence proper, the other was guilty of con-

tributory negligence by running down a crowded thoroughfare too fast. After listening for a few moments to the anger of my coolie, the laury driver simply put his hand to his head with a bow, and my man realised that he was addressing and haranguing a fellow-creature with his head covered. Instantly he removed his hat, and, with many apologies for his rudeness, gathered together the fragments of his broken rickisha, and, thoroughly ashamed of his behaviour, went off without another word. Can the good manners and politeness of the Japanese still be doubted, when amongst the lowest classes a reproof such as I have mentioned is received without a word in reply? What would have happened between a cabby and a carman? I do not think politeness would have been the outcome of a smash between them, and even should the carman have reproved the cabby for addressing him with his hat on, the latter would have considered such a remark as adding insult to injury, and would have given vent to even stronger language.

No, I defy any one to accuse the Japanese of conduct, either amongst themselves or towards a foreigner, which is not the essence of politeness and good manners. You will not be laughed at if you do or



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31. AT KAMAKURA.

Patented Oct. 20, 1931

say anything which may appear to them extraordinary, because they attribute your mistake to ignorance of their language or customs. They will rather try to explain to you your mistake, but will do it so discreetly that you must take it in good faith and without offence. Germans bring their heels together and bow politely; Frenchmen bow and scrape and make pretty speeches; Englishmen slap each other on the shoulder and say "Hello, old man," or "How's the world been treating you?" Each man is polite according to his own lights, but is it politeness which appeals to any foreigner? A German considers the Englishman rude and the Frenchman outwardly good-mannered; the Englishman considers both their bows superfluous, whilst the Frenchman fails to understand either; and yet the three nations will acknowledge the politeness of O Miya San when she bows to them and wishes them her "*O Hayō*" ("good-day").

Politeness is not their sole charm, though it is a great factor in their lives, and is an accomplishment any one can practise, if not imitate. Their dress, their smiles and happy faces, the way they walk, eat and drink—everything they do is delightful. It is not so much what they do, it is the way they do it.

How curious it is to mark the rapid expansion of the country, which barely forty years ago was in a semi-savage state, at any rate as savage and undisciplined as the Patagonians or the inhabitants of Central China are to-day. How odd to think that but a few years ago Japan had no real laws or government, no army or navy, except an untrained, uneducated band of patriots, who, fired with the zeal of loyalty, were willing to fight for their country—a country whose commerce has expanded, whose industries have become world-renowned. They have in these few years developed from a nonentity to a country respected amongst the nations of Europe. They have learnt in less than fifty years what it has taken us centuries to understand. Is all this due to civilisation, or is it due to a natural instinct fostered by the germ of civilisation?

It is curious on the eve of departure to retrace one's steps, to think back of the people and their houses, to realise the lack of disorderly behaviour, the absence of riot and criminal intention, to try and find fault with them individually or as a nation. It is pleasant to remember their kindness, however small, the courtesy and deference with which they treat a stranger. No bad-tempered speech escapes their

lips; curses are unknown in their language; they live a peaceable, orderly, well-regulated life.

The charm of the people does not alone account for the pleasures of living in the land. The country possesses scenery, both natural and cultivated, which it is hard to find anywhere else. Is it a wonder, then, that so many people go there and find it so hard to leave? The end is about to come, however, and with it the remembrances of sundry acts of kindness which, at the time, were too minute to strike one, but which one remembers always, alas! too late. You notice things, but fail to realise that they were done intentionally. You observed how the floral decorations were daily altered by your host, but forgot to thank him, and failed to understand that he intended it as a mark of respect, and with the idea of giving you pleasure. The end must come, and, with it, the painful good-bye.

When a sojourn in that country comes to an end, it is pleasant to feel that one has only happy reminiscences to take away. A sad farewell, but with the recollection of the pleasant days spent there, and the great hope of a speedy return to the land of the Rising Sun.

The steamer was ready in the harbour to take

me away from Japan. O Ainosuki San came down to the wharf to bid me a last farewell. She was the little maid who had made me comfortable at the tea-houses, a guide, companion, and faithful friend. She brought the *futon* and spread it ready on the floor, made my tea and cooked my food, mended my things, a mother, nurse, and sweetheart in one—every one has a sweetheart in Japan. The farewell is not merely a good-bye to the charms of a country, it is also the parting from one to whom one owes gratitude for her kindness and painstaking care. Both farewells are hard, though the one involves more sentiment than the other. I must pass quickly over the parting, though the memory of it is all that remains. The steamer was riding at anchor outside the bay—the steamer that has witnessed many a good-bye both before and since. I stood in the bows alone, and with my glasses I scanned the shore. There in front was the Grand Hotel with its verandah crowded with people who were destined to remain longer in the country; on the right the English Club, where I had spent many a pleasant day; beyond, the shops where I had made purchases; Tamamura, where photographs of all the beauties of Japan were offered for sale, a corner shop

in the Benten dori; Numashima, where some of the finest curios of Japan were displayed. Standing there and recalling all this, every street corner brought back some reminiscence of the past weeks, and made me wish for the scheduled time when the steamer should proceed on her way. The steam-launch that had brought us to the ship was landing those we left behind, handkerchiefs were still waving, and at length, with one last shrill note from the syren, the screw began to move, and the steamer proceeded on her homeward route. There in the distance was Fuji, with the sun illuminating her snow-clad peak—a last look, and then another good-bye.

Passing down the East coast, land always in sight, I remembered the promontory of Enoshima where I had watched children, with their younger burdens on their backs, shell picking; behind, Kamakura with its wonderful statue of the Great Buddha; here and there, dotted about, I could see the Japanese junks and fishing-boats, even fancied I could still hear the talk and see the faces. The steamer passed on, night set in, and with it came the realisation that the end had come, that I was leaving the country I long to revisit.

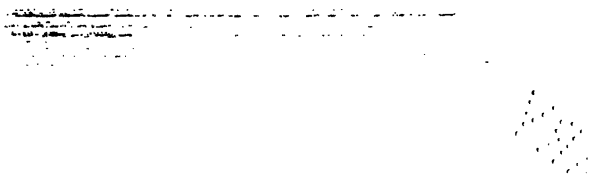
Next morning we were in the inland sea. A glorious sunny day, pleasure-boats and fishing-

smacks right and left crowded with people in their coloured dresses; on the right, village after village, one more picturesque and quaint than the other. There was the flourishing town of Ōsaka with its many bridges and crowded streets, its Government buildings, and its ancient castle standing upon a hill, with the two golden dragons keeping guard on the roof. Lower down I saw Kobe again, a town as European as Ōsaka was native, its harbour crowded with steamers busily loading and unloading merchandise. We proceeded, wending our way through innumerable islands, some covered with luxuriant vegetation, others bare, a fitting contrast. I saw Onomichi again, where the children used my legs as bridges, and the elder ones amused themselves by comparing heights; close to it was Ujima where the police officer politely informed me that cameras were tabooed. We passed through straits so narrow it seemed almost impossible for such a huge ship to navigate them in safety, a twelve-knot current running between the islands and the mainland. On our left was the Island of Miyajima with its floating temple and tame deer, and in front Moji, the entrance to the Straits of Shimonoseki, and the exit to the inland sea. An hour's passage took us through



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32. SAYŌNARA.



them and we emerged into the open sea, the last of the north island of Japan.

The following day we reached Nagasaki. The landing again, the seeing the same kind of scenery, the same race of people, until the final parting, was delightful. Towards evening the steamer left Japan, left the country where so many happy weeks had been spent. This time it meant farewell, at any rate for years, perhaps for ever. The sun went down and the moon rose, only next day to give place again to the sun. Was it the same sun that shone on the open sea, the same rays that lit up the crests of the waves? It seemed different, and yet we know it was the same. An illusion because the surroundings were missing, Japan being no more there to enchant. A feeling of melancholy crept over one, although the sun was as warm, the sky and sea as blue as the day before. Was it this that accounted for the difference, the knowledge that the past weeks were gone never to return? The melancholy feeling, the loneliness was accounted for in the one word "*Sayōnara*," the farewell to Japan.

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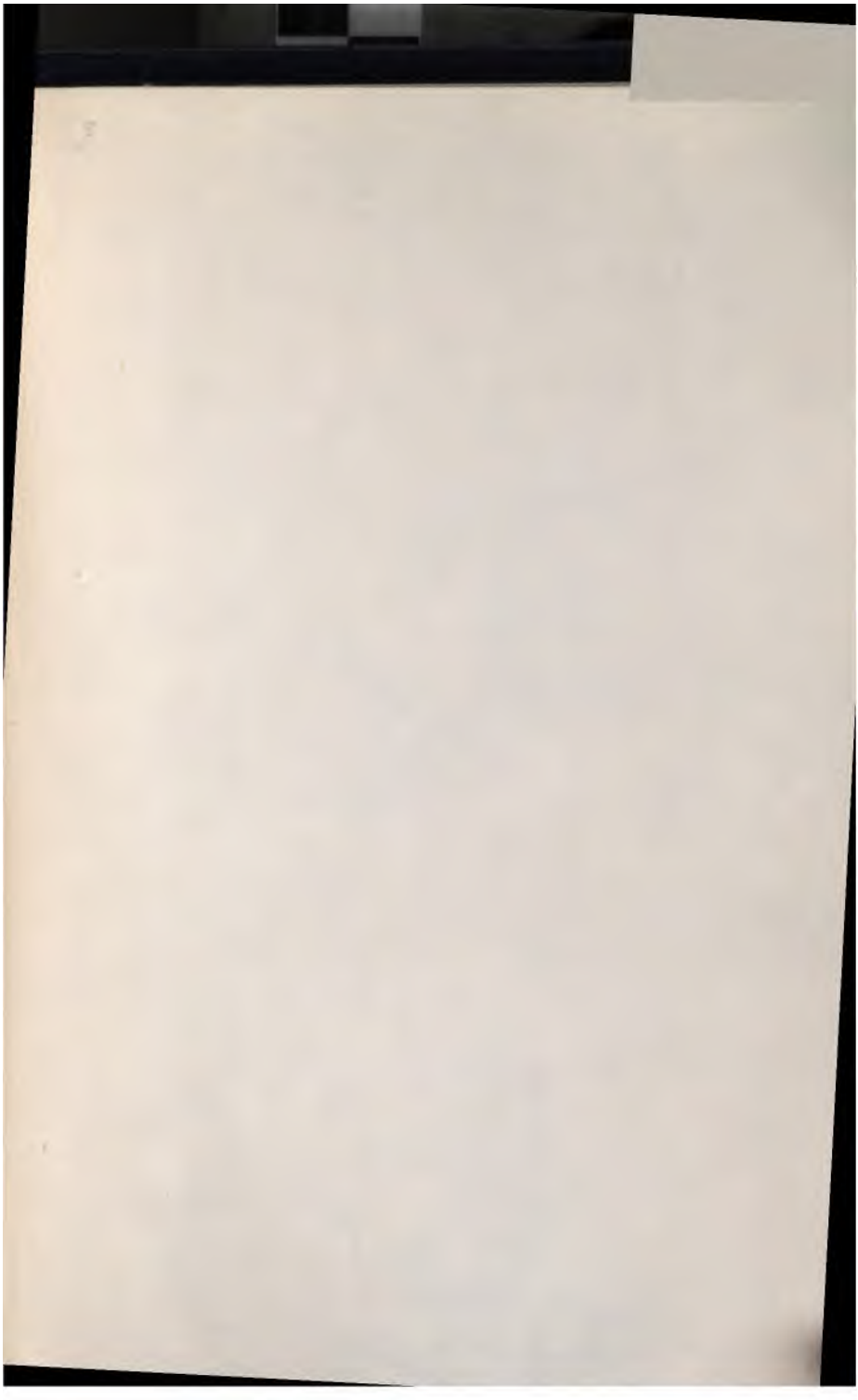
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